

WILD WEST WEEKLY

A MAGAZINE CONTAINING STORIES, SKETCHES Etc. OF WESTERN LIFE.

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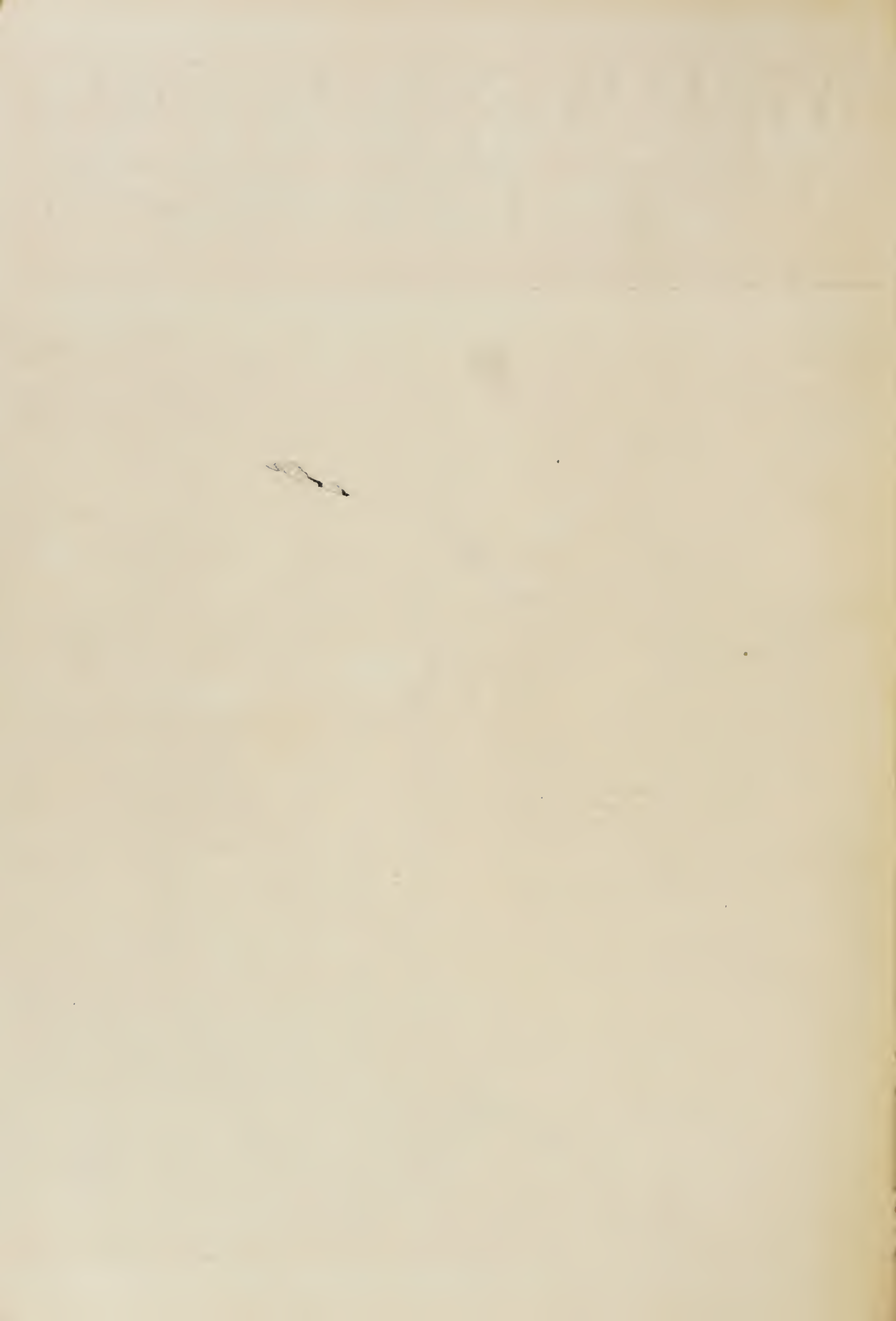
NEW YORK, JULY 21, 1916.

Price 5 Cents.

YOUNG WILD WEST AND THE PIUTE PRINCESS; OR, THE TRAIL THAT LED TO THE LOST LAND. *AND OTHER STORIES.* By AN OLD SCOUT.



The Piute princess pointed to an opening in the rocky wall. "This is the way to the Lost Land!" she said, stepping forward. It was a rather gruesome place that Young Wild West and his friends had been led to.



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Young Wild West and the Piute Princess!

OR

THE TRAIL THAT LED TO THE LOST LAND

By AN OLD SCOUT.

CHAPTER I.

THE STORY OF A WOUNDED MAN.

One day in spring a few years ago, when things were in a very unsettled state throughout that portion of the United States known as the Wild West, a horseman rode up to the principal hotel in the hustling mining town of Weston, Dakota, and dismounting, limped into the barroom.

He was a middle-aged man, and, judging by his appearance, he had a hard time of it, for his clothing was in tatters, and he was wounded in as many as half a dozen places.

"Gimme some liquor, pard," he said in a husky voice to the man in charge of the place. "I ain't got no money, but I need ther drink. I'll pay you some time for it."

The hotel was called "Brown's Gazoo," and it happened to be Brown himself who was in attendance on this particular morning.

"All right, stranger," he answered. "I reckon you're welcome to a drink of liquor, 'cause your general appearance shows that you need it. You kin have ther best in ther house, too."

He set out the bottle and a glass, and with his left hand—for his right was in a sling—the stranger poured out a glassful of the fiery beverage.

He did not say another word until he had swallowed the contents of the glass, and then, with a sigh of relief, he thanked the proprietor.

"Oh! You're welcome, as I said afore," was the reply. "What's ther matter, anyhow? You look as though you've been in putty hard luck, stranger."

"Hard luck ain't no name for it," was the retort. "Ther 'perience I've had in ther last week was enough to drive me crazy, since I lived through it."

There were three or four men in the place at the time, and as they heard the words of the man they crowded close to him to hear what was coming next.

Just then the hostler of the hotel came running in.

"Mister, your horse has just dropped dead. He was putty well played out, I reckon."

"I reckon so," was the rejoinder. "Well, ther poor beast did his best fur me, anyhow. He got me here. I feel sorry fur him, fur he was a mighty good critter."

All hands went out and saw that the horse had really given up the ghost.

The animal had no doubt been ridden hard, and just when there was a good rest ahead it collapsed.

While the men were looking at the carcass of the dead animal a strikingly handsome and athletic-looking fellow of perhaps twenty years approached.

He was attired in a fancy hunting suit of buckskin, trimmed with red fringe, and wore a pearl-colored sombrero.

The latter set off the handsome face to the best of advan-

tage, surmounting, as it did, a wealth of long chestnut hair which fell upon the boy's shoulders.

The newcomer was Young Wild West, Prince of the Saddle, Champion Deadshot of the West, Lasso King, and wealthy mine owner.

"Hello, Wild!" said Brown. "Here's a man what's been through ther mill, I reckon. He was just goin' ter tell us what had happened to him when his horse ups an' dies."

"Is that so?" and the boy quickly sized up the wounded man.

"It's a fact, young feller," spoke up the stranger. "Jest take a look at me."

Young Wild West followed him inside the building.

He showed that he was much interested in the man.

"You look as though a cup of coffee and something to eat would not hurt you," he remarked.

"I reckon it wouldn't, lad; I reckon it wouldn't. I ain't eat a thing since yesterday, an' all I had then was a chunk of jerked buffler meat. Ther landlord here was kind enough ter give me a drink of liquor, an' that made me feel like a new man, I kin tell yer!"

"Give him what he wants to eat, Brown. I'll pay for it."

"No, you won't, Wild. I reckon that any one that's hungry is welcome to a bite an' a sup in my house. I'll git him somethin' right away. Sit right down in ther back room, or you kin come in ther dining-room."

"The back room will do, I guess," spoke up the stranger. "'Spose I introduce myself to a little water first, though?"

"You're hungry, and your stomach needs something first. You can wash afterwards. Then we will go over to the doctor and have your wounds dressed."

"Thankee, young feller. I don't know who ye are, but I'm jest satersfied that ye're all right."

"Well, my name is Young Wild West."

"An' mine is Tom Mercer. What town do you call this, anyway?"

"Weston."

"I thought it might be. Well, I rode down from the Little Missouri Buttes in jest two days, then. It was rough travelin', too, an' my horse was wore out afore I got clear of the Injuns."

"You had your trouble with redskins, then?"

"Yes, about fifty Piutes led me about the toughest time I ever had fur a few days. What ther Piutes was doin' way up there I don't know, but they was there, an' they have got about as putty a young squaw with 'em as I ever seen. They call her a princess, or somethin' like that. If it hadn't been for her I would have been killed and scalped a dozen times afore this."

"The redskins were on the warpath, then?"

"Was they? Well, I never seen them worse, not since back in ther sixties! They've got a place up there among the Buttes which they is very jealous of. I learned from

ther putty princess that they was lookin' fur somethin' there, but she wouldn't tell me jest what it was. She said as much, though, as if she knew what it was they wanted to find, but wouldn't show 'em where to look fur it. She was a great gal, she was! Even if she was an Injun, she's got a heart in her that's as white as any that ever beat!"

Young Wild West was quite interested in what the man said.

The boy's love for excitement and adventure was almost marvelous, and whenever there was a chance for him to go on some trip that was dangerous to undertake he invariably went, especially if there was the least chance of benefiting mankind in general by doing so.

He advised Tom Mercer to eat before he said any more, and the meal being brought in just then, the wounded man acted on his advice.

Brown knew about what to put before a half-starved man, and he took care not to bring too much, so that he would not overdo the matter.

Young Wild West excused himself while Mercer was getting away with the coffee and eatables, and went out of the hotel.

As he did so he saw that quite a crowd had gathered around the dead horse and in it were his two partners, Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart.

Cheyenne Charlie was the famous government scout who had been associated with our hero on many perilous trips and dangerous escapades that were thrilling in the extreme.

He was six feet tall, straight as an arrow, perfectly formed, and wore his hair long, and had a heavy mustache that was so dark that it was nearly coal-black.

Jim Dart was a boy about Wild's age. He had been associated with him ever since they had met at Fort Bridger a couple of years before, and they were what might be called chums.

Though Dart was a thorough Westerner he did not wear his hair long, but in all other respects he looked to be just what he was—a young fellow of strength, courage and daring.

Wild called the two, and they left the crowd and followed him inside the hotel.

"I suppose you fellows heard all about how the wounded stranger arrived?" he remarked.

"Yes," was the reply from both.

"Well, the poor fellow is in the back room getting something to eat. He was about starved, I guess."

"Where did he come from?" asked Cheyenne Charlie.

"From the Little Missouri Buttes," he says.

"What was he in a scrimmage with, Indians?"

"Yes."

"I thought so. I seen a couple of arrow wounds on the horse. They must have been a gang that ain't much civilized."

"According to what he has told me, they must be a very savage crowd."

Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart at once became very much interested.

"Come inside and I will introduce him to you," said Young Wild West.

The two followed him to the back room, where Tom Mercer was making the eatables Brown had set before him disappear.

The proprietor followed them inside and closed the door.

"It ain't no use in lettin' ther feller be bothered too much with ther boys," he remarked. "Wild, suppose I send fur ther doctor an' let him fix ther feller up?"

"A good idea," was the reply.

The proprietor retired and at once dispatched a messenger for the physician of the town.

As Weston was a very healthy place the principal duties of the physician were to dress the wounds that the men received in the shooting affrays and brawls that were common there, as they were in all mining towns of the West in those days.

It so happened that he was not busy just then, and he hurried to the hotel with the man.

Tom Mercer had finished his meal by that time, and while the physician was dressing his injuries, which proved to be only flesh wounds, he told his story.

Two weeks before he had started from Deadwood with two companions to do some prospecting up in the region known as the Little Missouri Buttes.

They found it to be a very wild spot, with no signs of

they decided to give it up as a bad job and return to civilization.

Just as they were ready to start back for Deadwood they were set upon by a band of Indians, and in the short but sharp fight that followed Mercer's partners went under.

He was made a prisoner and was tied to a stake, to be burned that night.

The Indians, who were very cruel and savage, tortured him with sharpened sticks and beat him with clubs before they got ready to touch a lighted brand to the pile of brush that would blaze up and put him to a horrible death.

Just as the brand was to be applied a beautiful Indian maiden of perhaps seventeen years of age appeared among them and succeeded in making them set the prisoner free.

As he rode away, very thankful at his deliverance, the maiden followed him and overtook him.

Then she had a long talk with him, telling him that she was a princess and that she belonged to the Piute tribe and reigned over a portion of them who had sworn to never give in to the palefaces and had declared war upon them.

Mercer thanked her for what she had done for him and rode on.

But before morning he was again captured by some of the band, and again his life was saved by the Piute Princess.

He had a hard time of it for the next two or three days, for the redskins were persistent, and every time he strove to get away from the region they would find him and try to kill him.

But at last he did manage to elude them and reach Weston, as has already been described.

"What do you think of that?" asked Young Wild West of his two partners, when the story was finished.

"Great!" was the reply.

"I should say so. I believe every word of what Tom Mercer has said, boys. Now, then, are you ready to make a trip with me to the Little Missouri Buttes?"

"Hooray!" cried Cheyenne Charlie. "Jest what I expected he'd say, Jim. Will we go? Well, you kin jest bet your life we will, Wild."

CHAPTER II.

THE BRACELET OF GOLD.

Cheyenne Charlie threw his hat to the ceiling as he spoke so enthusiastically about making a trip to the Little Missouri Buttes.

"It is just about a hundred miles from here, isn't it?" asked Jim Dart.

"Just about, I should say," answered Wild.

"Yes, it's all of that, an' it's over a mighty tough road you'll have to go to git there," spoke up Tom Mercer. "But, boys, if you take my advice, you won't make ther journey. Nothin' good kin come out of it, anyhow. An' if you happen to fall in ther clutches of them savage Piute redskins you'll only git killed an' scalped fur your pains. There ain't no tellin' how long they'll be liable to stay around there, fur they seemed to be jest crazy to find what they were jokin' fur up there. That's what makes 'em so ugly, I reckon."

"Ugly, hey," sneered the scout. "Well, we might be able to tame ther measly coyotes a little, I reckon, hey, Jim?"

"I guess we could bring them down a peg or two," replied Dart.

The wounded man shook his head.

"If ther Piute Princess don't happen to come along you'll be goners, if they once git hold of yer," he said.

"There ain't no Injuns alive that Young Wild West an' his pards is afraid of," spoke up Brown, who was well acquainted with the ways of our friends.

"They rather like danger and excitement," observed the physician, with a smile. "They are home so little here in Weston that I have hardly had time to become well acquainted with them. But I have heard a great deal from their friends over at the office of the Wild West Mining and Improvement Company as to the way they usually conduct themselves. I fancy that they would rather nigh had Indians than eat."

"Well," retorted Mercer, with a sigh of weariness, "I don't s'pose anythin' I kin say will change their minds. But I know all about them redskins, an' I am satisfied that there ain't any worse ones in ther whole country."

The physician now got up to take his leave.

"I would suggest that the man be put to bed," he said to Brown. "He evidently has had a very hard time of it, and he needs a good refreshing sleep as much as anything else."

"He shall be taken care of," retorted Young Wild West. "Brown, just give Mr. Tom Mercer the very best accommodations the Gazoo affords and charge the same to my account."

"All right, Wild," said the proprietor.

The wounded man was conducted to a room upstairs a few minutes later, and then Young Wild West went over to the office of the Wild West Mining and Improvement Company, accompanied by Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart.

The building occupied by the company was a rather pretentious one for a town the size of Weston, and was located near the depot of the railroad that run into the place from Spondulicks.

As they entered the place they found several members of the company gathered there.

They appeared to be much pleased over something, for everybody was smiling, and a short, stout man of thirty who had a wooden leg, stood in the center of the group shaking hands with them, and acting very much as though he was the happiest man on earth.

"What does all this mean?" Young Wild West asked, looking at the gathering in surprise.

"Hello, boys!" called out the man with the wooden leg. "It's a boy, an' we've named him Wild!"

"Is that so, Jack? When did it happen?"

"About three hours ago. I thought I had better come over to the office and let you all know about it."

Wild, Charlie and Jim quickly stepped up and congratulated Jack Robedee on the arrival of a son at his house.

Jack was one of the partners of our hero, he having accompanied him on all his trips until he was unfortunate enough to lose a leg in a fight with a gang of outlaws one day.

Since that time he had only accompanied them now and then, as the wooden member was a vast hindrance to him when he got into tight places.

Jack had wedded a young lady named Martha Goff something like a year before, and now he was happy over the fact that his first-born was a boy, so he could name it after the dashing young hero of mountain and plain.

It was not until Jack had stumped away to his home, after being congratulated over and over again, that Wild started in to talk about the proposed trip to the Little Missouri Buttes.

"Do you know," he said to his two partners, "I believe Tom Mercer was adhering strictly to the truth when he told the story of his trip up there. It seems queer that such a band of bad Indians should be hanging around that part of the country, but it is even more strange that there should be a handsome Indian princess with them. When I spoke of making a trip up there I meant it. Things are rather dull just now, anyway, and it will keep us in trim to rough it a little in the mountains."

"That's right," exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie.

"Nothing would suit me better," declared Jim.

"Well, just consider it settled that we will go, then."

"How soon?" asked the scout.

"Just as soon as we can get ready. I never believe in putting things off."

"It won't take very long to get ready," said Dart. "Of course, the girls won't like the idea of our going on such a trip. But they will give in when we tell them that we are just bent on it."

"Yes," retorted Wild, with a smile. "It's always best to let them think that we would go anywhere without their consent. It makes them feel as though they have got control over us, and it does no harm, either."

After a little further talk on the subject it was decided that they should interview Tom Mercer again that evening, and then, if they found that he did not contradict himself on anything he had stated in his story, they would start out the very next day for a trip to the Little Missouri Buttes.

That afternoon Wild took a walk over to the post-office to see his sweetheart, pretty golden-haired Arietta Murdoch, and tell her of the proposed trip.

The girl sometimes assisted her grandfather, who was the postmaster, and our hero always made it a point to call at least once a day at the office.

"Hello, Et!" he said as he walked in and found the girl busy getting the mail sorted over. "I guess we'll go away tomorrow for a week or so."

"Where now, my restless rover?" asked Arietta, looking up interestedly.

"Oh, we are going off to look up an Indian princess."

"An Indian princess? What do you want to be meddling

with the redskins for? They are pretty quiet now, I have heard."

"You are not getting jealous, are you? Don't be afraid I will fall in love with the princess if we find her, Et."

"I am not afraid of that, Wild," was the retort. "But you shouldn't meddle with the Indians unless you have good cause, you know."

"Oh, well, this is a different case. There is a sort of mystery to it. I will tell you all about it."

He related the story of Tom Mercer, while the pretty post-mistress listened with interest.

"Then you are simply going off to these mountains to try and find the princess, is that it?" she queried.

"Yes, but there is something else that interests me more than her, though."

"What is that?"

"I would like to know what the redskins are looking for up in the Little Missouri Buttes."

"Ah! You think there might be a lot of hidden gold there, I suppose?"

"Et, you have hit the nail right on the head at the first shot."

"What do you want to be hunting for gold for? You are now as rich as any young fellow of your age ought to be."

"It isn't the riches I am after, it's the excitement. You know as well as I do that I couldn't content myself around here. It is altogether too slow."

"And yet some folks would call this a very lively town."

"Oh, I suppose a tenderfoot would call it lively. There is now and then some excitement."

"Well, Wild, when you go away I always fear that something will happen to you. If this band of Indians who are searching for something up in the mountains are as bad as what the man says, you are liable to lose your scalp."

"Don't fear on that score. I think too much of my locks to let a redskin lift them," and he brushed back the long chestnut hair that hung to his shoulders with just the least feeling of pride.

"Well, go ahead and hunt up your Piute Princess and solve the so-called mystery of the Little Missouri Buttes. But don't forget Weston and—and——"

"You, little one! No! I could never forget you, no matter where I went, or how long I was gone."

They were now drifting into what is termed the "sentimental," and after a lot of talk, such as lovers indulge in, Young Wild West went back to his residence to make ready for his journey.

That night he and his two partners met Tom Mercer, and when they had questioned him closely they made up their minds that he had not exaggerated his story.

Cheyenne Charlie had already obtained the consent of his wife Anna, and Jim Dart had satisfied his sweetheart, Eloise Gardner, that it was almost a necessity that he should go on the trip.

The next morning Young Wild West and his two partners rode out of town, equipped for the trip they were starting on.

Our hero was mounted on his splendid sorrel stallion Spitfire. Cheyenne Charlie rode a fine bay, and Jim Dart a black.

Used to camping out as they were, they simply took the things they actually needed, carrying them in their saddlebags strapped on behind.

Tom Mercer was on the stoop of the Gazoo hotel with Proprietor Brown when they went past, and as he bade them good luck on their journey he could not help giving them another warning as to the danger they would probably run into.

But such experienced fighters as they were could not easily be scared by anything the man said, so they simply laughed and rode on.

A hundred miles in the saddle was nothing to them, no matter if the way was rough, and when the sun set that day they had covered half the distance.

They were now far out of the limits of civilization, for at the time of which we write that portion of Wyoming had been but little explored.

It was a very picturesque spot that they camped at for their first night out.

On their left a mountain stream tumbled down the rocky side of a cliff, and on the right was the mouth of a deep ravine, the sides of which were fringed with stunted pines and oaks.

Before them lay a tedious, winding ascent, and behind them the rough, uneven way they had come.

Cheyenne Charlie had shot a bear that morning, and as they had brought the hams of the beast with them he set about building a fire to cook some of the steaks with, while Wild and Jim saw to the comfort of their horses and made preparations for their sleep that night.

Supper was duly cooked and eaten, and then the watches for the night were arranged in three equal parts, commencing right away.

Nothing occurred to disturb them except the occasional howl of a prairie wolf, and when the sun arose the next morning they hastened to get ready to resume their journey.

Thus far they had been following the trail made by Tom Mercer as he came into Weston, but when the sun was sinking toward the western horizon that afternoon they suddenly lost it.

But they had reached the Buttes, and now they realized that if the Indians were still in that vicinity they must be on the lookout for them.

But as yet they had not seen any signs that would indicate that there were any redskins there.

Just as they were thinking of going into camp for the second night, however, they suddenly came upon the ashes of a camp-fire that had but lately gone out.

The prints of moccasined feet and of horses' hoofs were there in plain evidence, too, and they now knew that they would soon come in contact with the Indians.

While hunting about Jim Dart picked up something that was bright and shining, and as he held it up to the view of his companion they saw that it was a bracelet of gold!

It was simply a plain band, rudely made, but there was no question that it was of solid gold.

"That is rather a queer thing to find here," remarked our hero, as he made an examination of the bracelet. "I wouldn't be surprised if that belonged to the Piute Princess Tom Mercer told us about."

"The paleface brave speaks the truth; his tongue is straight, for the bracelet is mine!" exclaimed a low, musical voice, and then a beautiful Indian maiden stepped before them from behind a clump of bushes.

CHAPTER III.

RIPPLING STREAM, THE PIUTE PRINCESS.

Though somewhat startled, Young Wild West and his partners were not surprised to any great extent when they heard the words and saw the speaker as she stepped before them.

The look in her shoe-like eyes was a friendly one, but as she slowly approached an expression of uneasiness came over her face.

Wild held out the bracelet.

"Take it, Princess of the Piutes," he exclaimed, doffing his hat as he spoke. "The golden band is yours. I was certain of it when I took it in my hand."

She bowed slightly when she took the bracelet, showing that she had been educated to the ways of the palefaces somewhat, and then, looking our hero in the eyes searchingly, she said:

"For what did the paleface braves come here?"

"To find what the Piutes are vainly searching for in these hills," replied Wild quickly.

The maiden gave a violent start.

"What know you of the Piutes and what they look for?" she questioned.

"Oh, we heard it from a man who was up here a few days ago, and we thought we would come and have a look around."

The Indian maiden looked annoyed.

She remained silent for a moment, and then, turning to leave, she exclaimed:

"You are in danger if you stay here, palefaces! Go back to your homes and leave the Piutes alone!"

Then as quickly as she had appeared before them she darted behind the bushes and disappeared.

Jim Dart made a move as though to leap forward and detain her, but Wild stopped him.

"Wait!" he said. "We will see more of her. Let her have her own way. By Jove! Things are beginning to get interesting already."

"You're right," spoke up Cheyenne Charlie. "I didn't think we'd see the Indian girl so soon, if we seen her at all."

"Well, to tell the truth, after we came upon this place and saw the ashes of the late fire, I was expecting to see her at any moment," Wild said. "Now, then, since the Indians must have given up this place as a camping ground, it would be a good idea for us to locate somewhere around here, I think."

"There's a good place right over there," suggested Jim, pointing to a little glen that could just be seen over an irregular ridge of rock.

"There's water there, too," added the scout. "See! That stream comes right down through there!"

"All right," answered our hero. "Let's go over there, then. It will soon be sunset, and once the sun goes down it is not long before dark."

They led their horses along a few yards, and turning the point of the ridge, reached the place selected in less than two minutes.

As there were hostile Indians close by they, of course, lighted no fire.

They had to be content with a supper of dried beef and broiled bear meat, washed down with pure water that trickled from the rocks.

They had finished their rather frugal repast when darkness came on.

Young Wild West now began to grow a trifle uneasy.

He felt that he ought to go out and take a scout around the vicinity and try to find the Indians.

The more he thought this way the more he felt like going, and finally he turned to his two companions and said:

"Boys, I guess I'll go and see if I can find the redskins. You stay right here, and if I don't show up in an hour you will know that I have got into trouble."

They both would have been pleased to go with him, but they did not say so.

They well knew that if he had wanted either of them to accompany him he would have said so.

Cheyenne Charlie looked at the big silver watch he carried in a pocket of his buckskin coat, lighting a match in order to do so, and marked the time.

"All right, Wild," he said. "Go ahead."

Our hero never lingered long after once coming to a conclusion.

Tightening his belt around him, he picked up his rifle, which he had left leaning against a tree while they ate, and then, without another word, started off through the darkness.

Young Wild West was not long in finding the trail the Indians had left, and then he proceeded to follow it, pausing every now and then to feel of the ground with his hands and locate the footprints.

He soon found that the trail led its way through a scraggy growth of pines and then around the base of a high bluff.

With noiseless tread the daring boy kept on, and soon he had placed a mile between him and the camp.

Before he had gone another hundred yards he caught sight of a glimmer of light between the trees and fantastic shaped rocks that reared themselves on every hand.

"Ah!" muttered Wild. "So I have found them, have I? Well, now to see just how many there are of them and learn what they are up to."

Using all his stealth, he now began creeping toward the glimmering light.

It grew large as he neared it, and soon it assumed the proportions of a camp-fire.

The boy now started off to the left toward an uneven row of boulders and rocks, which he could easily see surrounded that portion of the camp and kept off the chilling wind.

When he reached the boulders he found himself within pistol-shot of the camp of redskins.

Creeping a little further to the left, he came to a place where he could look right down into the camp, and then it was that he saw a sight that was startling in the extreme.

Tied to a stake that was driven in the ground within a few feet of the blazing fire was the Piute Princess.

Gathered around her were fully a dozen savage-looking redskins with tomahawks in their hands, ready to slay the beautiful copper-skinned maiden.

The princess was gazing at them with white indifference. Instead of fright being depicted on her face a glance of scorn and hatred flashed from her luminous, dark eyes.

Young Wild West raised his rifle, but changing his mind, crept along the fringe of rocks and got a little nearer.

He could hear the Indians talking excitedly in their own language, everything they said being addressed to the helpless maiden.

While he could understand and converse quite fluently in

the Sioux tongue. Wild could not understand what the Piutes were saying.

But it was easy to imagine that they were threatening the life of their prisoner, as their every action indicated it.

All the chivalry in his nature was aroused now.

That the princess was not savage in her ways was more than evident by the fact that she had saved the life of Tom Meyer.

Then, again, she could talk too good English to be a close follower of the ways of her people.

Wild worked his way closer and closer to the camp, and soon was within twenty feet of the tree to which the maiden was tied.

Just then the fair captive began talking to them in their own language.

From her manner our hero easily understood that she was heaping scorn and defiance upon their heads, but notwithstanding this, her eloquence caused the braves to stand in silence until she was through.

When she closed her mouth at the last word, the captive shut her eyes also.

There was a quick jumbling of words among the Indians, and then one of them made a motion and the rest picked up the brushwood that lay in a pile close at hand and began heaping it around the helpless princess.

They kept enlarging on the pile until the edge of it reached the blazing fire.

Then the brush, which was dry as tinder, quickly became ignited, and the flames spread toward the tree.

But the maiden did not open her eyes.

Evidently she was resigned to her fate, and with stoical indifference meant to die.

As the pile of brush burst into a big blaze the Indian who had given the orders raised his tomahawk and stepped up, as though to brain the girl.

Then Young Wild West's rifle flew to his shoulder.

Crack!

The redskin dropped with a bullet through his brain, and uttering a yell, Wild darted forward, kicking the blazing brush right and left.

He changed his rifle to his left hand and drew his knife with his right as he ran.

Taken completely by surprise, the red fiends drew back and ran for cover.

Two quick strokes of his knife and Wild had liberated the captive.

"Come!" he exclaimed in a whisper. "The Piute Princess must come with me if she would be saved."

"I will go," she replied, and then away they darted, just as a howl of rage came from the lips of the Indians.

But this had scarcely sounded when there came an answering yell close by.

"My friends come!" exclaimed the maiden, slackening her speed.

"Come on!" said Young Wild West.

Only an instant did she hesitate, and then, looking at the handsome young paleface by her side, she gave him her hand and ran at his side with the speed of a fawn.

As they dashed away through the darkness Wild heard the sounds of a conflict back at the camp.

"They are fighting among themselves," he said to his companion.

"Yes," she answered. "Some of the braves wanted to kill me because I would not tell them the way to the Lost Land, and the others did not. Those who wanted to kill me thought me as I came back from you after you had given me my load of gold. They would have done it but for you."

"It looked very much that way," answered our hero. "Well, I could not sit there and see you put an end to, so I shot the chief who was going to strike you with the tomahawk, and the fire killed your face. It was nothing much to do. I knew I would surprise them so I would have time to get you home."

"You are a great brave for a paleface."

"Oh! There are lots of paleface braves."

"Rippling Stream has never seen one like you."

"Is your name Rippling Stream, then?"

"Yes. What is the name of the young paleface brave?"

"Young Wild West."

"It is a good name. Young Wild West has the thanks of Rippling Stream for saving her from the bad braves of the Lost Land. She will never forget him."

"Rippling Stream has been a little as she said this."

"Thank you very much, Wild said.

"No! The braves will not follow now. They will fight till they tire, and then they will hold a council to see what shall be done. They dare not touch me again this night! There are braves there who would kill every one of those who were going to burn me at the stake. They will not let the others follow me, but they will come to look for me when the sun comes up."

"Well, I am glad that they are not following us," remarked Wild. "If they were I would have to do a lot of shooting, I suppose, and then it might so happen that they would catch us. Then I would be in trouble."

Notwithstanding that the princess said they would not be followed, Young Wild West kept his ears open for sounds of pursuit.

But none came, and in a very few minutes they had reached the spot where the maiden had appeared so suddenly just before sunset.

Wild gave a signal to let his partners know who it was, and then he made right for the camp, followed by the Indian maiden.

"Great catamounts!" cried Cheyenne Charlie, when he saw that Wild had somebody with him. "I'll be whipped with a rawhide if he ain't brought ther Injun princess with him, Jim."

"That's right," answered Wild. "It's a good thing I went out to take a scout around, boys. If I hadn't the girl would have been killed in a horrible manner by some of her own people."

"I thought I heard a rifle shot a little while ago," said the scout. "Did you open fire on 'em, Wild?"

"I dropped one of them," was the reply.

While they were talking the Piute Princess was looking around the place they had selected as a camp the best they could in the darkness.

"This is no good place," she said, shaking her head. "Rippling Stream will take the three palefaces to her camp. Come!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE GANG OF EIGHT AND THE INDIAN.

Not more than a mile from the spot where Young Wild West and his partners had chosen for his camping place for the night eight rough and reckless looking men were gathered in a cave before a smoldering fire.

One of them sat with his face turned toward the darkness that filled the gorge in which the cave was located.

He was the guard, and he was taking no part in the conversation the rest were indulging in.

There was some sort of argument in progress, and finally the men began to talk rather excitedly.

Then the guard turned around and said:

"I reckon you fellers had better go it a little easy. S'pose ther Injuns happen to be anywhere around? If they was they could hear you fellows gabbling like a lot of fools! Shet up, now! What's ther use of havin' our fire screened by cedar bushes if we're goin' ter make noise enough to be heard a mile off?"

There was a short silence after this.

"It's better to work along in harmony, anyway," went on the man. "What's ther use in arguin' ther question? Ther redskins come up here fur somethin', an' what could it be thet they came fur if it wasn't fur gold! They've come up here ter git it, an' we've come up here fur ther purpose of stealin' it from 'em after they git it. Now shet up! Don't argue any more about it! I'm goin' ter have peace in ther family, I am."

"All right, Rudolph," retorted one, who had probably been doing more of the talking than any of the rest. "If you say shet up, why, shet it is. But I've still got my opinion, though, and it can't be knocked out of me. I say as how ther reds are after somethin' else besides gold."

"Well, I says they ain't. Now we'll wait an' see who's right."

"All right, Rudolph. You're the leader of the gang, 'cause we elected yer 'nanimously to ther position. I'll shet up, an' we'll wait an' see."

"That sounds a little more like it," remarked Gabe, from the mouth of the cave.

"You see," resumed the leader of the gang, "I was ther first one to git hold of this thing. If I hadn't been a-listenin' about two weeks ago, an' hadn't understood er little

of ther Injun lingo. I reckon we wouldn't have come up here to ther Buttes. We wasn't any of us doin' anything to speak of down in Deadwood, an' says I to myself, says I, 'If these Injuns are goin' ter take ther trouble to go up to ther Buttes an' hunt fur some gold what's there, why, we might as well foller 'em, an' when they gits it, take it away from 'em. An Injun ain't no good, anyhow, an' when a white man robs 'em he ain't doin' no more'n right,' says I."

There was a general nod of approval at this.

"Well, Rudolph, as you're ther only one what kin understand ther lingo of these Injuns, an' you've heard a couple of 'em say as how they're comin' up here with a band what had cut loose from ther reservation ter hunt up some gold or somethin', I say that you ought to be given a vote of thanks for bringing us here. It ain't been done yet, but I think it ought to be done right now."

The fellow who said this had been doing the least talking of any of them, and when he made the remark he got up and nodded vigorously to all hands.

"I second that motion," called out the man on guard.

"All right, then! All in favor of that say 'aye!'" exclaimed Rudolph.

They all answered in the affirmative.

"It's all right boys. I've received a vote of thanks, which I'm thankful to you for. We'll all——"

He did not finish what he was going to say, for at that instant a guttural "Ugh!" came from the mouth of the cave, and a stalwart Indian brave loomed up out of the darkness and stood with folded arms right in front of the astonished guard.

"Who the dickens are you?" demanded Gabe, leveling his revolver at the redskin.

"Sh!" was the retort. "Paleface make heap too much noise. Me Crooked Tongue; me friend to paleface."

"Oh!" and there was something like a sigh of relief that came from the guard.

"Crooked Tongue alone; he can come in by palefaces and have talk with them?"

"Sartin'!" retorted Rudolph, rising to his feet.

But he and all the rest of them evidently were suspicious that the redskin was up to something, for they all had their hands on their shooters.

As the Indian stepped into the light, they noticed that he was bleeding from a cut on the side of the head.

"Been in a scrimmage, I reckon," remarked Rudolph.

"Yes," was the reply, and the red man snapped his eyes savagely. "My people drive me away, and I ride along with my horse until I hear the voices of palefaces and see their fire. Then I come here, because I am a friend of the palefaces."

"Set down," said the leader of the gang.

Crooked Tongue, as he called himself, obeyed.

"What paleface do here?" he asked, as he stripped a piece from the blanket he had thrown over his shoulders and tied it about his wounded head.

"We're up here lookin' fur gold," answered Rudolph.

Crooked Tongue gave a satisfied nod.

"If the palefaces will swear to fight for me against the bad Indians who drove me from them I will take them to a place where there is plenty of gold—more than they could carry away in a month."

The eyes of the men glistened, while they craned their necks forward and listened eagerly.

"We'll stick by yer, Crooked Tongue."

"Swear it," said the Indian.

"Boys, hold up your hands and take an oath to stick to Crooked Tongue through thick an' thin!"

Every man held up his right hand and repeated the oath Rudolph administered to them.

Then Crooked Tongue seemed to be satisfied.

Rippling Stream, a princess of the Piutes, is here in the mountains," he said. "She knows the trail that leads to the Lost Land. In the Lost Land there is plenty of gold. Crooked Tongue wants some of the gold, and so does his paleface friends. We will get the gold!"

"How will we get it?" asked one of the men, who could not understand what the Indian meant.

"That will be easy enough, I reckon," and Rudolph looked at his men with an air of importance. "I reckon us eight kin put up a pretty stiff fight when it comes to ther pint."

"It will be easy to make Rippling Stream tell," went on Crooked Tongue. "She was tied to the stake less than half an hour ago, and the fire was started. But she shut her eyes, and would have burned to ashes without telling the

secret. Bear Claw, the chief, took pity on her and was going to dash her brains out with a tomahawk to save her the pain of burning, when a white boy with long hair shot him and cut her loose and carried her away in the darkness. Then the braves who did not want to torture Rippling Stream came out, and there was a fight. I alone stood to torture her and make her tell. But I had slain two of the braves who liked the princess, and then they said I must think as they did or leave. I left."

The red man drew himself up proudly and threw out his chest as he said this.

"So there was a young feller with long hair what saved ther gal, then?" asked Rudolph, scratching his head in a puzzled way.

"Yes."

"Was he alone?"

"Yes, there was no one with him."

"But he must have had some friends around somewhere. 'Cause what was he doing around here all alone? Another thing, he wouldn't have had the nerve to shoot a redskin an' then rush up an' cut ther gal loose. You kin bet that there was some one near by waitin' fur him, an' ready ter shoot down ther whole lot of ye if you'd started after him real hot. Boys, this looks bad! I didn't think there was any other whites aroun' here 'cept us."

"It do look bad," Gabe hastened to admit.

Crooked Tongue looked from one to another of the men and saw that the faces of all showed that they were troubled somewhat.

"There was only one," he said, shaking his head decisively, "and he was a boy with long hair."

"It might be," retorted the leader of the gang. "But it seems to me he must have had some around there with him, even if they didn't show up."

"We will go to the cave where Rippling Stream stays," resumed the Indian. "If she is there and has the young paleface with her we will kill the paleface and make her our captive. Then you may find a way to make her tell us the way to the Lost Land. There are ugly ones among you, and if one of them tells her she must be his squaw, or else show us the way, she will do it. Crooked Tongue has spoken."

That meant that the redskin did not intend to have anything further to say on the subject.

He began walking around the narrow confines of the cave, examining his weapons, which consisted of a tomahawk, hunting-knife and an old-fashioned muzzle-loading pistol.

"Come on, boys! We may as well go with him an' see what's in ther wind. We all know what we come up here fur, an' if we don't try we'll never win."

Rather reluctantly the men made ready to follow their leader.

In five minutes they were ready, and then, leaving the fire smoldering at the mouth of the cave, they walked off in the darkness with their red ally in the lead. Before going, however, Crooked Tongue got his horse and tied it where those of the rascally band of whites were.

"It is not far from here where the princess of the Piutes is staying," he said. "She thought her people did not know when she left the reservation to come here and make the journey to the Lost Land, but we did know it. More than two hundred moons ago one of the ancestors of Rippling Stream was what the paleface would call a king. It was not a Lost Land that he lived in then, but has been so a long, long time—before the paleface ever saw the hunting grounds of the red man it was the Lost Land."

"But when we get there it will be a found land!" cried Rudolph, exultantly.

Crooked Tongue now motioned for them to be silent, and then, with cat-like tread, he led the way over the rough side of the mountain.

The further they proceeded the more cautious he became, and a minute later he motioned for the gang to stop.

"Crooked Tongue go ahead and see," he said.

Then he crept away in the darkness.

It was nearly ten minutes before he came back, and when he reached the allies he shook his head.

"Rippling Stream is there," he whispered. "She has the boy with the long hair and two more palefaces with her. They are friends and they are on the watch. If we fight them we must be quick, or they will shoot some of us."

This was just what the men wanted to hear.

While they were willing to go ahead and capture the princess, they did not like the idea of attempting it when

three determined men with rifles ready to pour lead into them were guarding her.

"I can't understand what brought them fellers up here," observed Rudolph, shaking his head.

"S'pose you sneak up and take a look at 'em?" suggested Gabe. "Mebbe you might have seen 'em somewhere before."

"Yes," spoke up the Indian. "Let the paleface come with me and see the palefaces. They may be his friends."

The leader of the band of rascals assented to this proposition after a moment's thought.

Then he started off in the company of Crooked Tongue.

They crept along for perhaps a hundred yards, and then lay flat on the ground for the space of a few seconds.

The sound of low voices came to their ears, and Rudolph came to the quick conclusion that they were less than a dozen yards from where the speakers were.

That was close enough for him, and he promptly began moving away.

The redskins followed him, and when they were nearly back to their waiting companions the villainous white man asked his red companion how he knew there were three with the Indian maiden.

"Crooked Tongue hear the voices of three besides the princess," was the answer. "He hear the boy who saved Rippling Stream and two more. Crooked Tongue has good ears, and he never makes a mistake."

"Well, I'll be jiggered if I could tell whether there was one feller there with the gal or a dozen," was the reply. "I reckon it would be a little risky to tackle 'em, though."

When they got back to the rest of the gang they reported, and then followed a lengthy controversy.

But at length it was decided to make an attack on the quarters of the Piute Princess, and they started out to do it.

CHAPTER V.

THE JOURNEY TO THE LOST LAND BEGINS.

"Boys," said Young Wild West, as Rippling Stream gave them the invitation to go to her camp, "I guess it would be a good idea to go. Don't you think so?"

"Sartin'!" exclaimed Charlie. "Maybe she has got a good place, where we'd be all right in case ther Injuns come after us."

"And it may be more sheltered than this," said Jim Dart. "If I am not mistaken it is going to rain before daylight."

"It is a cave with a running brook in it," spoke up the Piute Princess. "The horses will be safe there, too, and you can fight from behind big boulders if my people try to drive us out."

"Well, we may as well get there at once, then," said Wild. "Let's start."

It took them but a short time to get their traps on the horses, and then, with the Indian maiden in the lead, they proceeded through the darkness, leading the animals.

It happened to be in a direction just contrary to the camp of the redskins, and just about the same distance.

As might be supposed, our three friends were keeping a sharp watch for the redskins as they proceeded.

But nothing interfered with them, and soon they were at the cave the Piute Princess had spoken of.

There was just room for the horses to get through the rather low entrance, and then, going to the back of the cave, Rippling Stream lighted a rudely made candle that had been formed of buffalo tallow.

She took care to keep this well in the rear, so the light could not possibly be seen unless some one happened to pass directly in front of the cave.

As Wild and his partners led their horses over to the place indicated by the girl, the bray of a donkey sounded, and, peering through the gloom of the cave, they saw the animal.

Rippling Stream promptly came over and patted the donkey on the nose, and it became quiet.

She then told them that the beast of burden had been brought to the mountains for the sole purpose of carrying her camping outfit.

"I have got a horse," she said. "See! There he is. I ride the horse, and the long-eared beast carries what I have brought with me."

The three soon placed their horses in the roomy cave so they would not be apt to interfere with the donkey, and then they took a good look about the place.

It was one of the caves that are so common in the mountains of the West, with its niches and irregular formation.

The front part of it was well calculated to resist an attack, as there were big boulders there that would answer as a

barricade, and the passage between them was not wide enough to allow more than two to enter at a time.

"I reckon this is all right," remarked Cheyenne Charlie, as he tossed his blankets on the dry ground close to the mouth of the cave. "I s'pose we'll stop right here, won't we, gal?"

"Yes," replied the Piute Princess. "The palefaces will rest there to-night, and I will stay back here, where I have stayed for fifteen days. To-morrow morning I will lead the handsome paleface with the long hair and his friends over a trail that they never dreamed of following, if they will go."

The look she cast at Wild just then told plainly that she had taken a strong fancy to him—aye, that she had fallen in love with him.

The boy noticed it himself, but he did not let on that he was watching her at all.

However, he was interested in what she said.

"You are going to take us on the trail that leads to the Lost Land?" he remarked, interrogatively.

"Yes," was the reply. "I am going to take the palefaces where I would not lead my own people. I am the last one of the royal blood, as you might call it, of the ancient Piutes. My father knew of the Lost Land, and his father knew of it before him. But none of my ancestors tried to visit it, and it has at last fallen to the lot of Rippling Stream, the last of her family, to go there. Young Wild West shall go with her, and when he returns he will come back laden with gold."

"All right, princess," retorted Wild. "I assure you that we will be glad to make such a journey. Is it far?"

"Only one day's ride, but it is a ride through the dark. If we would not miss the daylight too long we had better start at sunset."

"A ride through the dark!" echoed Young Wild West.

"Yes. But I shall tell you no more now. Wait, handsome boy with the long hair, wait!"

Our hero tried to question her, but it was in vain.

She suddenly dropped the subject of the Lost Land altogether, and seemed to want to talk on other subjects.

Our friends learned from her that she had received a pretty fair schooling on the reservation, and that all her views tended to uphold the course of the whites in extending civilization.

She talked fast and willingly, using fair English, and as her voice was low and musical she was pleasing to listen to.

It was about twenty minutes after their arrival at the cave that the sharp ears of Cheyenne Charlie, who was on the alert for danger, caught a suspicious sound.

"Sh!" said he, warningly. "Some one's comin'!"

Rippling Stream blew out the candle light instantly.

The scout was peering from behind a boulder, trying to pierce the inky gloom, when suddenly he saw a form slowly moving toward the cave.

But that was not all.

Others were following it.

"Halt!" he cried, speaking with a suddenness that startled his companions, even.

A deathly silence followed the command.

Then suddenly a scrambling noise came to the ears of our friends, and several dark forms came bounding toward the cave.

Crack!

The foremost threw up his hands and dropped.

Crack, crack, crack! Crae-e-k!

The attacking party drew back and poured a volley at the mouth of the cave.

But the bullets merely flattened on the rocks.

"Give it to them, boys!" cried Young Wild West. "They mean to kill us if they can, so show them no mercy!"

Crack, crack, crack!

The three each fired a shot, and the survivors scattered and ran in all directions.

Rudolph's gang had made the attack, but it had proven very disastrous to them, since three of the villains fell to rise no more, and another received a bullet in his arm.

They had enough of it for that night, even Crooked Tongue the Indian being more than satisfied.

They got together after a while and made their way back to the cave they had occupied when the redskin had come to them, leaving the dead where they fell.

Meanwhile Young Wild West and his companions were waiting for the villains to renew the attack.

Quite naturally they thought they were Indians, though it was not the way redskins usually fought.

Not a cry had been heard from them.

"I guess we're safe enough here," remarked Charlie, with

a chuckle. "I reckon them fellers will be a little more careful how they come sneakin' up ther next time. I'll bet a dollar agin a doughnut that they wasn't all Injuns, though."

"I'm of the same opinion," declared Jim Dart.

"Well, they did not act like Indians, I must say," retorted Wild. "But it may be that they were doing it that way for effect."

The Piute Princess said nothing.

Evidently she had no opinion on the matter.

A sharp watch was kept all night, but none bothered them or came meddling around the cave.

When daylight came Young Wild West was just finishing his trick at watching, and as it became light enough for him to see the silent figures lying on the ground he readily observed that they were whites.

"It must be that there are others besides the Indians looking to find the way to the Lost Land," he thought. "Well, it seems that we are the lucky parties, anyhow. I don't like the way the princess looks at me, though, for it is quite plain that she has been foolish enough to fall in love with me because I saved her life. I must be careful what I say to her."

When it got a little lighter he awoke his sleeping partners, and the noise they made in getting up from their blankets aroused Rippling Stream, who could readily hear them, since she was behind an angle of the rocky formation of the cave twenty feet distant from them.

The first thing the beautiful Indian princess did was to go to the narrow stream that trickled through the cave and bathe her face and hands.

This done, she came out toward the mouth of the cave and saluted her three paleface friends.

"Our enemies did not come back, Rippling Stream," said Wild. "They were white men, and three of them lie out there as they fell when we fired at them."

"Palefaces!" and the princess looked surprised.

"Yes. We thought as much by the way they tried to fight us last night."

A troubled look came over the face of Rippling Stream.

"We must go to the Lost Land at once," she said, speaking decisively. "There are too many who are looking for it. We must go and leave them behind. We must not wait till darkness."

"All right. Just as you say."

"Let us eat our breakfast and then start."

"Certainly."

"Pointing to a heap of grass that must have been cut the day before, she said:

"Give your horses food. There is plenty for all of them."

Charlie and Jim hastened to do as she directed, leaving Wild standing on guard at the mouth of the cave.

The princess hastened to get something ready for them to eat.

On the other side of the narrow stream there was a crack in the wall of rock that admitted daylight.

It was a rift, and was so crooked that the outside could not be seen; and as it was not large enough to admit the body of a man, it was perfectly safe to go there, even if their enemies were outside.

Rippling Stream gathered up a pile of dry wood and twigs and quickly started a fire.

A few minutes later Jim Dart set in to help her, and in a quarter of an hour the odor of coffee and broiling meat infused the cave.

The draught of air that came in the entrance carried the smoke through the fissure, so there was no danger of them being blinded or choked by it.

The sun was just rising when they finished a hearty meal, and then Cheyenne Charlie declared that he was ready for anything.

Rippling Stream at once began loading the donkey with the traps she carried, and while this was being done Young Wild West decided to go out and take a look around, knowing that it was more than likely that their enemies were somewhere about.

He went out in his usual cautious manner, keeping well under the cover of the rocks and boulders that were quite numerous there.

At the end of fifteen minutes he came back, reporting that there was no one to be seen.

"It is well," said the Piute Princess, with a smile of satisfaction. "The bad men who wanted to kill us will stop to bury their dead, and by that time we will be on our way to the Lost Land! Come! We will be off!"

Two minutes later they had led their horses out of the cave and were mounted.

"This way," said Rippling Stream pointing to a narrow defile on their left. "If the bad palefaces and the people of my race do not see us inside of ten minutes they will not see us at all!"

Wondering what they were going to find inside of ten minutes, and not a little puzzled over what the Piute Princess had said about the Lost Land, our three friends followed her, keeping their horses at a walk.

They kept a watch on all sides as they rode along, their rifles ready to spit out the death-dealing bullets at the least warning.

For five minutes they kept on through the defile, and then Young Wild West realized that if they were to be attacked it must be from the rear or ahead, since the sides of the place ran up to sharp edges, and no man could possibly get up there and shoot at them.

The further they progressed the wider the way became and the more wild and fantastic-shaped were the rocks.

In less than ten minutes from the time they had left the cave Rippling Stream called a halt and dismounted.

She motioned them to follow her example, and without a word they did so.

Then she stepped forward on foot, the donkey following as though it were a dog.

Leaving their horses standing, Young Wild West and his two partners stepped around a bend, just as the Indian maiden came to a pause.

Then they gave a start and looked at each other.

On the ground before them lay the whitened bones of men and horses—just how many they could not tell, for they seemed to be piled up in some places.

The Piute Princess pointed to an opening in the rocky wall.

"This is the way to the Lost Land," she said, stepping forward.

It was a rather gruesome place that Young Wild West and his friends had been led to.

A deathly silence followed for perhaps ten seconds.

Then Rippling Stream turned to them and said:

"Will you go with me to the Lost Land?"

"Yes," replied Wild.

"Get your horses and come, then!"

They stepped back and took their horses by the bridles, for she motioned them not to mount.

Then, taking the donkey's bridle by one hand and that of the horse by the other, she led them forward over the whitening bones to the black opening.

There was a tinge of paleness on the face of Cheyenne Charlie, and he looked questioningly at Wild.

The scout was just a mite superstitious, and it evidently occurred to him that the opening looked too much like a grave, more especially as the skeletons lay so near it.

But the glance that our hero shot at him was reassuring, and that settled it.

The maiden had some little difficulty in getting the donkey into the mouth of the passage—for passage it certainly was—but she managed it, and then Jim Dart came with his horse.

Charlie followed next, and Wild brought up the rear.

Just as our hero stepped into the opening the clatter of hoofs was heard down the defile.

"Hurry!" cried the princess. "They must not see us!"

But a shot rang out just as Wild got his horse in, and he knew that he had been seen.

"Quick!" cried the Piute Princess, springing forward. "We must roll this boulder over."

Our friends saw what she meant, and, regardless of the fact that they might be sealing themselves in a living tomb, put their shoulders to the boulder and sent it rolling across the opening.

The journey to the Lost Land had now really begun.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ALLIES START IN PURSUIT.

When Rudolph and his surviving followers had settled themselves in their cave once more they were in anything but a pleasant mind.

Their Indian ally had nothing to say at all, and as the allies talked over what had happened he did not appear to notice them.

Gabe, who was one of the men who had escaped being shot, was just thinking of asking the red man what he intended to

now, when suddenly the chirping of a cricket came to their ears.

Though it was a little out of the ordinary to hear a cricket chirping up there on the mountainside, it is hardly possible that the white rascals would have paid any attention to it if the Indian had not pricked up his ears and listened.

The sound being repeated, he got upon his feet and stepped toward the entrance to the cave, drawing his knife as he did so.

"What's ther matter, Crooked Tongue?" spoke up Rudolph, grabbing his rifle and springing to his feet.

"A Piute brave comes," was the reply. "The palefaces will be ready to shoot while Crooked Tongue talks with him."

"Oh, all right, then! Boys, just be ready for somethin' ter happen."

Then the redskin answered the signal that had been given and walked boldly out into the darkness.

As he disappeared in the gloom the thought came over the five villains that he was taking leave of them for good and all, after the plan to capture the princess had failed.

Then they thought that they should have shot him for having been the means of causing them to lose three men, and the wounding of another.

"We're a set of fools, boys," said Gabe. "That wasn't any signal. Ther redskin made out it was so he could sneak off and quit us."

"An' if it is so, what are we goin' ter do about it?" went on the man who had proposed the idea. "He'll jest bring a whole lot of ther reds here an' wipe us out, that's what he will."

There was nothing said to this, but every man present acted as though he felt very squeamish.

There was only one thing for them to do now, and that was to remain right there and keep on the watch.

With bated breath and eyes that were distended from striving to pierce the darkness outside, they waited.

Five, ten minutes passed.

Then they heard soft footfalls approaching.

The men raised their rifles.

But at that instant a reassuring voice called out:

"Crooked Toongue comes back."

Then the form of the Indian loomed up out of the darkness.

"Well, what did ther Injuns want?" questioned Rudolph, looking at Crooked Tongue a trifle suspiciously.

"They came to make friends with me," was the reply.

"Oh, they did, did they?"

"Yes. They say that they must find the way to get to the Lost Land and find the gold of our forefathers."

"An' what about us?"

"They say that the palefaces shall go, too, and that they shall share the gold with them."

"Do they mean what they say, do yer think?" spoke up Gabe.

"Yes, the red men mean what they say. They are sorry that they drove me from them. They will take the palefaces with them to the Lost Land and we will all share alike."

"What do yer think of ther proposition, boys?" asked Rudolph, looking at his companions in an undecided way.

"I reckon it would be about ther best thing we could do ter do in with ther redskins," said one. "If we don't it are most likely they'll take a notion to put an end to us, so we couldn't git a crowd ter come an' look for ther place where ther gold is. Ther best thing we kin do is ter join in with 'em an' on ther risk they mean ter do ther right thing by us."

"I think so, too."

"So do I."

"Yes, too."

"He'll hit ther nail right on ther head."

"Well, it sorter strikes me that it will be all right ter do it," remarked the leader, turning to Crooked Tongue. "You're unanimous on it, so you can go an' tell yer people that it's all right."

"Good!" exclaimed the Indian. "The palefaces have judged right."

Then he hastened away in the darkness again.

In a few minutes he came back with half a dozen braves.

He introduced them in his rude way, and then they began a talk business.

Some of them could not speak English very well, but they understood enough of it to know what was going on.

The whites let them do the most of the talking and decided at every point, because it was a very fair offer.

The plan was not to attempt the capture of the Piute Princess, but to follow her when she set out for the Lost Land.

That she would go there and take the paleface brave who had saved her life with her the Indians seemed certain of.

"Rippling Stream came here to the mountains to pay a visit to the Lost Land, because she is the last of her family," said Crooked Tongue. "She did not want any of the rest of the people to go with her, but she will take the boy with the long hair and his friends with her. She will do that to spite the red men for trying to take her life. We must watch and follow her, and when we get there we can deal with her and the palefaces as they deserve to be dealt with."

"That's ther talk, Crooked Tongue!" exclaimed Rudolph, seizing the hand of the chief and shaking it heartily. "You kin count on us from ther beginnin' to ther end! I'm sorry we lost three of our gang, but it can't be helped."

"No, it can't be helped," was the reply. "We may lose more before we get through with the young paleface with the long hair, so don't worry."

After it had been arranged to their full satisfaction three trusted braves were sent to keep watch upon the headquarters of Rippling Stream and to report the instant the girl and her companions left the cave.

Crooked Tongue remained with the whites all night, but the rest of the redskins went back to their camp.

When our friends left the cave and started on the journey they had agreed to take with the Piute Princess one of the Indians appointed to watch them was hot on the trail.

They found the redskin who had followed the princess and her paleface friends waiting at the mouth of the defile.

"They have gone there," he said, pointing the way. "They have gone to a place where the bones of those who have gone before us lay."

That the red men had been through the defile and seen the skeletons of the men and horses was more than evident by his words.

And that they had a superstition that it was a place that ought not to be visited was quite certain.

A short consultation was held, and the majority of the Indians were in favor of keeping away from the place.

But the rest sided in with the whites and rode right off in hot pursuit.

The man who had fired the shot just as Wild was disappearing into the opening was Rudolph, the leader of the villainous gang of whites.

But he was not the only one who had caught a glimpse of our hero as he went into the mouth of the passage.

Gabe, Crooked Tongue, and two or three of the Indians also saw him.

Generally the more ignorant a person is the more superstitious he is.

Rudolph and his followers were an ignorant lot.

The sight of the pile of bones of men and horses was awe-inspiring to them.

The grinning skulls seemed to be staring at them mockingly, as though waiting to watch them go to their doom.

The men shrugged their shoulders and looked at each other questioningly.

"What about it, boys?" Rudolph finally remarked.

"Well, I'll tell you what I think," replied Gabe. "It looks to me as though them fellers went into that hole, an' that when they come out of it again they didn't have strength to git any further, an' died right there! That's how it looks to me."

He kept on pointing at the gruesome objects lying on the ground while he was speaking.

The redskins sat still on the backs of their horses and said nothing.

When each of the white men had spoken it was found that they about agreed with Gabe.

"What do you think about it, Crooked Tongue?" the latter asked, turning to the brave who had allied with them.

"Ugh!" was the reply.

"You don't like ther looks of ther place much, then?"

"Rippling Stream go in there; the palefaces go in there. We must go in there, too."

As he said this he dismounted and walked boldly to the opening.

The rest watched him until they saw him vainly trying to push something away from the hole.

Then Rudolph picked up sufficient courage to dismount and walk up to him.

"Come on, boys!" he called out. "They've shoved a boulder afore ther entrance, so we can't foller 'em. Let's git it out of ther way an' hustle erlong after 'em. Let's git it out skellingtons, an' then you won't feel so funny-like."

One by one the whites ventured to the spot.

Then the Indians became a little bolder and followed them. Enough of them put their shoulders against the boulder to push it aside and allow them to enter.

"Good!" cried Crooked Tongue. "We have found the trail that leads to the Lost Land."

CHAPTER VII.

THE LOST LAND.

As the boulder rolled across the opening Rippling Stream cried excitedly to Young Wild West and his two partners to mount and follow her.

Then she handed our hero a pitch-pine torch from the supply she had on the back of the donkey.

Wild mounted the sorrel and then struck a match and applied it to the torch.

As the flame flared up the Piute Princess started her horse on a sharp trot through the dark passage.

There was really nothing left for our friends to do now but to follow her, and this they did.

As Wild got alongside the girl and the flaming torch cast a ray of light ahead, she urged her horse to a faster gait, jerking on the bridle of the donkey, and causing the animal to start on a run to keep up.

"We must hurry!" was all she said.

Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart brought up the rear, and their horses kept the donkey moving more than anything else.

The passage was amply large enough for two to ride abreast, and was rather winding.

When they rode along for about five minutes they noticed that they were going down a slight descent, too, but this did not worry them any.

They were in for it now, and they were not the ones to "queal," as the scout put it.

But little was said during the first half hour of the strange journey.

Then it occurred to Wild that they had better halt and listen for sounds of pursuit, as, when he came to think of it, he knew the villains would have little difficulty in removing the boulder from the mouth of the passage.

The Piute Princess was reluctant to do so, but she reined in her horse when the rest did.

They halted for fully a minute, but not a sound could they hear that indicated that they were being followed through the passage.

Then the journey was resumed, the maiden lighting a fresh torch.

Our friends were now getting used to it, and they conversed on various topics of a cheering nature.

But deep down in their hearts they were wondering how it was all going to turn out.

Two hours slipped by.

It seemed much longer than that since they had left the outside world, but the watches of our friends were proof that such was not the case.

It was just a little before noon that they came to a place where the passage widened into a sort of cavern, and as they slowed down to a walk the sound of running water came to their ears.

The eyes of the maiden brightened.

"We will rest here," she said. "We are half-way to the Lost Land. I know it, for I have heard my father speak of the running water marking the spot that told half the journey was completed. He learned this from his father, who knew it from his forefathers."

"Well, I reckon it's about time to give ther horses a little breathin' spell an' have a bite to eat ourselves," remarked Cheyenne Charlie.

"That's right," said Jim Dart. "But I don't suppose we'll have much of a feed, since we've only got some dried buffalo meat and a few hard biscuits."

"We will find plenty to eat when we git to the Lost Land," replied Rippling Stream. "The paleface braves must make the best of it until we get there."

"I can't see how we are goin' ter find much in ther line of grub in ther center of ther earth," and the scout shook his head, as though he was of the opinion that it was a sort of fool's errand they were going upon, after all.

"Be patient and wait," was all the princess said.

They halted for half an hour beside the stream of running water, which proceeded on through the passage from the place it came issuing through the cracks in the rocky wall.

"When we reach the Lost Land we will still have the running brook at our side. My forefathers have said it," remarked the princess, as they set out to make the last of the journey.

Young Wild West, though just the least bit doubtful about finding any "Lost Land," or any other kind but some vast cavern, was satisfied to go on.

"We'll have to trust to luck, boys, as we have many times before," he said to his partners.

"That's it!" exclaimed Jim. "But perhaps Rippling Stream may tell us what kind of a place it is we are going to."

"I cannot tell you that," was the quick reply. "Only that it is a place where the sun shines a small part of the day, and that the elk, the buffalo, and the horse are to be found there."

"Well, I'm mighty glad of that, then," spoke up Charlie. "It must be that we're goin' right through the mountains, and that we'll fetch up somewhere on the other side."

This was evidently the opinion of his companions, for they both nodded.

The long afternoon slowly wore away.

Several times they halted for the space of a minute to listen, but no sounds of pursuit came to their ears.

As the hours flitted by and the time for the sun to set drew nigh the face of the Piute Princess began to wear an anxious look.

Young Wild West studied her carefully, and it struck him she was beginning to think that perhaps the tale of the Lost Land as handed down from generation to generation of her forefathers was but a myth after all.

He said nothing to her, however, but began to think of a means to get out of the underground place in case they found nothing but Stygian darkness when they reached the place where they could proceed no further, as they eventually must.

It was shortly after six o'clock when he looked at his watch, and, noticing that the torch which Jim Dart was carrying was pretty well burned out, he suggested that a new one be lighted.

"No, no!" exclaimed the princess. "We will not need another torch to reach the Lost Land. It is time we came into the daylight now, for the sun has not set yet."

So Jim held fast to the butt of the flickering torch and they urged their horses to a faster gait.

Ten minutes later they rounded a bend and came suddenly into a wide space, and at the same moment there came a puff of air and the torch went out.

Then it was that Young Wild West and his friends found that a faint light filled the place and that they could distinguish objects at a good distance off.

The stream they had been following had widened into a big lake, on the banks of which vegetation could be seen.

"The Lost Land!" exclaimed the Piute Princess, holding up her hands and raising her face upward, as though giving thanks to the Great Spirit of her race.

"Boys, I guess we have arrived," said Wild, jubilantly. "I see grass and bushes growing, and where they grow I am sure we can live."

"I should reckon so!" said the scout. "Hooray for her Lost Land an' ther Piute Princess what brought us here."

Wild and Jim took off their hats and joined Charlie in giving a cheer.

Rippling Stream turned to them with an expression of extreme happiness on her face.

"Come!" she cried. "We will go forward and find a place to camp for the night. See! The sun is sinking, and the light is no longer being cast in this place. It will be dark in a very few minutes."

They started their tired horses forward at a sharp trot, following the shore of the lake on the right.

Two minutes later they emerged into a place where the blue sky and shining stars could be seen above their heads.

"That's ther most welcome sight I've seen since we come inter ther passage," said Cheyenne Charlie, pointing to the heavens above him.

Both Wild and Jim agreed with him.

It had indeed been a wearisome journey through the dark, and the uncertainty as to where they were going to fetch up made it all the more cheering when they found that they could see the sky once more.

The further they traversed the strange country they had reached through the underground passage the more vegetation and evidences of life they came upon.

Just as it was getting so dark that they were unable to see any longer they suddenly came upon a group of stone buildings.

Young Wild West brought his horse to a halt and turned to his companions with the words:

"We have reached a city, I guess."

"Yes, a city," answered Rippling Stream. "City of the Piutes of long ago. A city that you palefaces would have called an Aztec city if one of your learned scholars had found it."

Before they could say anything further a bright light suddenly flashed before them, and they found that it was indeed a city they had found.

The building before them, which was a massive three-story built of stone, had suddenly become lighted from top to bottom, and in less than a second later others showed up in the same way all over, as far as the eye could reach.

It was well for them that the light had come to their aid, for had they gone fifty feet farther they would have gone right over the brink of a chasm!

With silent wonder they sat in the saddle and gazed at the really magnificent sight ahead of them.

Just across the chasm was a rocky wall some twelve feet in height, and beyond this was the city.

But nowhere could they see a way to get across the chasm, which must have been twenty feet in width.

But what was most astounding of all was the unearthly silence that prevailed.

Here was a city before them, lighted up as if by magic, but not a soul could be seen stirring in it.

Young Wild West finally broke the silence by saying:

"Let us go to that clump of trees over there on the shore of the lake and camp until daylight comes. This is one of the mysteries of the world, I guess, and I think that we should not be too hasty in attempting to solve it."

"Young Wild West speaks words of wisdom," said the Piute Princess. "He knows as much about the Lost Land as I do now, and what he orders shall be done by me."

Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart did not vouchsafe a word, but at once turned their horses in the direction of the clump of trees our hero had indicated.

They had scarcely reached the spot when the lights went out as quickly as they had come.

But a moment later there was a fitful burst here and there, and then the place was illumined again.

"That don't appear to be the work of man," said Wild, shaking his head. "See! It isn't the buildings alone that are illumined."

"There is a glare of light that comes right out of a hole in the ground."

The Piute Princess sank to the ground in a state that was bordering on terror.

It was more than evident that she had not anticipated anything like this.

Wild was the most cool of the lot.

As the light died away and then came out again a little later he made up his mind that it was the result of some strange electrical force.

He was quite of the opinion that the strange city was not inhabited, otherwise they would have seen or heard something indicating it.

Then, again, the buildings looked so quaint and ancient in appearance that it was almost preposterous to even think of such a thing as people living in them.

"At one time those houses were occupied," he observed, as the collection of buildings lighted up for the fourth or fifth time. "But it was long ago, I should judge. I have read of such places as this being found in Mexico and Nevada, but I never dreamed that there was a lost city in Wyoming."

"These are certainly the wonderfulest thing I ever struck!" Cheyenne Charlie exclaimed.

"Well, we may as well try and get used to it," observed Jim. "Wild, suppose we kindle a fire and make some coffee? Do you think it will be safe?"

"As far as that strange city is concerned it will," was the reply. "What we have got to look out for now is that our enemies have not followed us here."

"Well, I reckon if they have follered us they won't come very close to this here place. Ther lightin' up an' goin' out will sorter surprise 'em, an' they'll feel like goin' back."

Wild nodded.

He believed that what the scout said was pretty nearly right.

There was plenty of dry wood to be found, so Jim got a pile together and started a fire.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE ALLIES.

When Rudolph and Crooked Tongue and the rest of the allies entered the mouth of the passage they were just about fifteen minutes behind our friends.

A few minutes had been wasted before they approached the place, on account of the skeletons, and the balance of the time was taken up before they decided to follow the trail underground.

Though there were something like thirty Indians and five whites in the party, they did not hasten to overtake our friends.

They feared them because they knew they could shoot straight.

Then, again, Crooked Tongue, who was now the leader of the party, wanted the Piute Princess to lead them to the place where the gold was waiting for them before he got in a conflict with her and her friends.

Consequently they did not proceed very fast through the passage, and it was something like three hours after Young Wild West and his friends got there that they reached the Lost Land.

It is more than likely that they would never have come that far if it had not been for the fact that they knew some one had preceded them.

That was sufficient to lead them on.

When the villainous crowd reached the place where the first signs of vegetation showed they chose the shore of the lake to follow that was opposite to the one our friends had taken.

And so it happened that they took the better course.

The Indians had provided themselves with torches when they found that the princess had them, so they had plenty of light on the way.

When they had covered about two hundred yards around the shore of the lake they suddenly found themselves following a level roadway that was as smooth as a floor.

It ran in a serpentine fashion through a wood that was so dense that even the savage red warriors looked apprehensively at it, no doubt expecting to see some strange monster pounce out and give them battle at any moment.

But nothing of the kind happened, though they did hear a savage growl now and then.

When about half a mile had been covered they suddenly came in sight of a strange, unnatural light ahead.

But it soon vanished.

It was the phenomenon our friends had witnessed on their arrival in the silent city.

The woods being so dense and the way they were going so long, they had been unable to see it at first.

But, though the way they had chosen was the longest by three times the distance, it was the surest.

It led to the city, and the other did not, since the chasm cut it off.

As the light kept flashing and disappearing every now and then, growing stronger each time it appeared, the allied crowd of men grew more apprehensive.

Crooked Tongue was now the brains of the party, and he kept allaying their fears and urging them on.

"The gold! The gold!" he kept crying every time they halted and hesitated about proceeding any further.

But, strive as he might, he could not get them far enough to see the city, and finally they halted within half a mile of it, though they had no idea that such a thing existed.

They went into camp just the same as they would have done had they been somewhere on the mountain at the other end of the passage.

The fact was, that not one of them believed but that they had come through a natural tunnel and reached a valley at the other end of the passage.

Even the Indians thought this.

But all hands were very hopeful—ay, confident—that they would find an abundance of gold somewhere.

When they had built a big campfire and had started in to cook the meat they had brought with them they got into a better frame of mind, though all hands did not much like the lightning, as they chose to call it.

"Boys," said Rudolph to his four companions as they sat near the fire in a group, "there's only one thing we lack just now."

"What's that?" asked Gabe.

"Whisky," was the quick reply.

"That's so!" and then all nodded in the affirmative, and then wound up by shaking their heads.

"It are too bad, boys, but it can't be helped. A good half pint of whisky apiece now would make us sleep like a top, an' when mornin' come we'd be ready fur anythin'.

"That's what we would, cap!"

Some of the redskins overheard what they were talking about, and they agreed with them.

As a general thing an Indian has a great desire for alcoholic stimulants.

They have been known in some cases to squeeze the juice from decaying fruit and drink it for its stimulating effects, regardless of its taste.

One of the red men, when he heard the white men talking about whisky in such longing terms, got up and proceeded to make a survey of the trees in the dense woods that lined the roadway on either side.

It probably occurred to him that the climate of the Lost Land was as balmy as that of the south, and that being the case, there ought to be some fruit growing about.

He spoke something in his own tongue to a couple of his companions, and then, picking up a burning brand, they went off into the woods.

Luck seemed to be with them, if it could be called luck.

They came upon some trees that resembled the apple somewhat, and beneath them there was a plentiful supply of decaying fruit that looked like mammoth plums.

So much was there of it that it was fully six inches thick in some places.

The redskins gave guttural exclamations of satisfaction and began to taste it.

That they thought it all right was quite plain, for they began gathering it as fast as they could.

One of them ran and got a couple of buckets from the supplies they had brought with them, and he notified the rest of the find.

The result was that the entire gang were soon at work gathering up the strange fruit.

The Indians who had first discovered it took pains to tell them to take only that which was soured and half rotten, and that they could make firewater of it.

Two or three bushels of the stuff were picked and scraped up and carried over to the campfire.

Then the process of squeezing out began, and the fruit being very juicy, they soon had a couple of pails.

Then a drink was served all around.

The stuff was sour, bitter and ill smelling, but as soon as they tasted it they knew that there was a large percentage of alcohol in it, so they swallowed it eagerly.

The two pails were soon emptied.

Then more juice was squeezed out.

If ever any one had their desires gratified in an unexpected manner it was that party of redskins and their white friends.

If there had been a small percentage of opium in the juice they had squeezed from the fruit it could not have affected them, greater.

In less than half an hour from the time they had taken the first taste of the stuff every man of them was drunk.

Some of them tried to dance and sing, others wanted to fight and quarrel; but it was impossible for them to do much of anything, and soon they dropped off into a stupor—every man of them.

How long they remained in that state they scarcely knew, but when Rudolph was awakened by Gabe, who had come to, still in a very muddled state, they looked around and found that they were the only ones awake.

"My! What a headache I've got, Gabe!"

"So've I, Rudolph."

"That must have been awful stuff we drank last night."

"Ther worst I ever struck."

"My throat's burnin' up."

"So's mine."

"Let's get a good drink of water."

"Where are ye goin' to git it?" and the villain looked around.

"Oh, there must be some around somewhere. Git that pail over there!"

The pail was picked up, and then the two men made off in search of water.

It was now quite light, and as the two villains took a sur-

vey of the strange place they were in they saw the light came from their right.

Off to their left it was as black as a thunder-cloud—black, too, for it was naught but Stygian darkness.

But they had no time to wonder over this just then.

They wanted water.

They walked along the level, winding roadway, looking on both sides for some signs of a running stream or pool.

They kept on going, until suddenly they came in sight of the lake they had seen when they first entered the Lost Land.

"I reckon that water will do," said Rudolph, as he ran eagerly for the shore.

"Sartin'!" replied his companion, following him.

The first villain reached the bank, and being so thirsty, dropped upon his stomach, and leaning over, placed his lips to the surface of the water.

Eagerly he quaffed the life-giving fluid.

Gabe, however, rinsed the pail and then filled it, after which he drank from it.

"That tastes good," he remarked.

"Yes," answered the leader of the gang. "Let me have a hack at the pail."

When they had filled themselves with water they dipped the pail in to take some back to camp, knowing that their companions would be greatly in need of it when they awakened.

It was just then that they happened to take a look around, and what was their surprise when they found themselves gazing upon what had once been a stately city!

We say what had once been, for now it was but a ruins, though some of the building seemed to be in a fair state of repair.

"What do you call that, Gabe?" questioned Rudolph, rubbing his eyes.

"Ther Lost Land, I suppose."

"Yes, but who built that?"

Gabe shook his head.

"Don't ask me. Mebbe Crooked Tongue kin tell us somethin' about it. Let's git back an' wake him up."

"All right; but one thing, there ain't no one livin' there," and Rudolph nodded at the quaint and noble pieces of architecture that loomed up less than half a mile distant.

"I reckon you're right on that. But—look! There is some one livin' there, too."

He pointed excitedly to the heart of the city, and then, sure enough, living forms could be seen.

Gabe counted them, and found that there were but four.

"I reckon I know who they are," he said.

"Know who they are? What d'ye mean?"

"Jest what I say. They're the Piute Princess an' ther fellers what was with her."

Rudolph breathed a sigh of relief.

"That's so. I'll bet that's just who they are. I never thought of them. I wonder what kind of a place that is, an' whether they've found any gold yet?"

"Ther only way for us to do is ter git over there as soon as we kin. Let's git back an' arouse ther camp an' tell 'em what we've seen."

The two men took another look at the ruined city and the moving figures they saw in the streets, and then they hastened for the camp.

They found all hands asleep yet, but soon aroused them.

They were in such a muddled state that they did not comprehend what Rudolph and Gabe were talking about.

They wanted water, and the pail the villains brought back with them went but a very little way among the crowd.

Those refreshed by it listened to what was told them now, and the result was that they were ready to move at once.

Those who had not tasted the water headed for the lake on a run, and the rest followed, leading the horses.

When they finally got in sight of the wonderful city Rudolph and Gabe found that those they had seen moving about had disappeared from sight.

Instead of giving them any information about the place, Crooked Tongue was as much puzzled as they had been.

"We will find the gold there," was all he said, and that partly satisfied the men.

When all hands had drunk their fill from the lake the party set out to side into the city of the Lost Land.

"You'd better be ready, boys, for ther fellers with ther Piute Princess are putty sure ter show fight," said Rudolph.

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE ANCIENT CITY.

Young Wild West and his companions managed to make quite a meal out of the first one they had in Lost Land.

They were all hungry from their long journey through the passage and it was a great relief when they had appeased their appetites and were able to sit down by the fire and rest.

Beyond the fact that it gave them light, the fire was not necessary now, for a thermometer would certainly have registered in the neighborhood of eighty degrees in the strange place.

When they had rested a while they began to grow sleepy, so Wild suggested that they put out a watch and turn in.

The Piute Princess arranged her own sleeping quarters, taking care not to get too far away from our friends.

The long night passed without anything happening to disturb them, save the queer action of the brilliant light now and then.

But they got used to this, and all hands managed to get sufficient sleep.

They were all anxious to see the coming of dawn, and when they first rays of light began to pervade the realms of the Lost Land they were all up and stirring.

With the coming of daylight the flashes ceased, and when he was satisfied of this Cheyenne Charlie breathed a sigh of relief.

When the scout could not understand a thing he was bound to worry over it.

He certainly could not understand the strange lights that infused the deserted city, and as long as it continued acting that way just so long would he be in a state of wonderment as to the cause.

As it grew lighter in the place our friends saw where the rays were admitted.

They were right inside a hollow mountain with an opening at the top of probably half a mile in length and not quite that distance in width.

If this opening could have been seen from a balloon it would certainly have looked like a vast crater of an extinct volcano.

And that is probably just what it was.

Ages before, when the volcano had died out, a race of people had no doubt accidentally discovered it.

Then came the building of the city and the subsequent abandoning of the place.

It was only a matter of conjecture, but Young Wild West readily came to these conclusions.

"While it seems mighty strange to us," he said, "there have been stranger discoveries than this made, so we should not get to puzzling ourselves over the why and wherefore of it all."

"Young Wild West talks with much wisdom," replied Rippling Stream. "His judgment is great. Let him say what we will do next."

"Well, as soon as we have eaten breakfast I suppose that we go over to the city and do a little exploring."

Just then a squealing sound came to their ears, followed by a scampering of many feet.

Looking back into a little patch of woods, they beheld a herd of fat looking animals resembling hogs, scampering about hither and thither, rooting up the ground and making all the actions and noises peculiar to swine.

"Fresh pork!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie, drawing his hunting knife and making a bee-line for the herd.

He got right among the animals before they saw him, and when they did see him they did not try to get away very fast, but looked at him as though undecided as to whether they should let him be there or drive him out.

Charlie picked out a fine one of medium size, and, catching him by the fore leg, threw him over on the ground.

Then he very quickly did the butchering act, the squeals of the porker sending the rest of the herd scampering away in the wildest alarm.

The scout dragged out the carcass and soon had it hanging to the most convenient limb.

"I reckon some of that will be all right for supper," he said.

The Piute Princess nodded.

"The legend says there is plenty to eat and drink in the Lost Land," she remarked.

They made a breakfast of what they had brought with

them, and then they were ready to explore the strange city, which they could now see was in a state of decay.

"How are we going to get across the chasm, Wild?" Jim Dart asked, when they were ready to leave the camp.

"We will have to make a bridge if there is no other way," was the reply.

"There must be a road to the city," spoke up Rippling Stream. "We came the wrong way in the darkness. Let us go back to the point where the lake begins. Then we may find a way to get around on the other side of the chasm."

"That is a good idea, I think," said Wild. "Come on. We will take everything with us, as it may not be necessary for us to come back here again."

"The pork goes, too!" exclaimed the scout, as he slung the slain pig over the back of his horse. "I ain't goin' ter git beat out of my pork supper."

In a few minutes they were making their way over the back track along the shore of the lake.

It had been getting lighter all the time, and they could see the blue sky plainly through the wide opening in the top of the mountains, though it was not directly over their heads.

The city was built under the sky, so the sun and rain could both visit it, and around it for perhaps a quarter of a mile on all sides the vegetation was as perfect as that found in a southern clime.

Back of this, where it gradually grew darker, it was of a rather peculiar form, dying away gradually until finally it ended in rude formations of stone and earth.

All this was noticed by our friends as they rode back to the place where the underground stream emptied into the lake.

When they got there they found a natural bridge over the stream at the very point where it emptied into the lake, and then it was that they noticed hoofprints other than those that had been made by their own horses.

"Our enemies have followed us here, and they went this way," said Wild, pointing to the way around the opposite shore of the lake.

"We will go that way, too, then!" spoke up the princess, her dark eyes flashing dangerously. "Every man who has come here without my permission must die here! He shall never see another golden sunset."

Our friends looked at each other.

They were wondering how she meant to dispose of so many of her enemies.

"Come!" the girl exclaimed. "Are you ready?"

"Yes," answered Young Wild West, who was no more afraid to follow the trail of the Indians and whites than he was to go over a new piece of ground where no one existed to bother them.

When they had covered a short distance they suddenly came upon the smooth roadway that led through the woods.

Rippling Stream was elated when she saw this.

"It is well," she remarked. "The tongues of my forefathers have been straight."

"We want to be a bit careful," advised Wild. "There is no use in allowing the redskins and the scoundrels with them to hear us coming if we can help it. I don't fancy an ambush."

"They will not be waiting for us to come," spoke up the princess. "They have gone ahead, and they will look for us when they get to the ruined city of my ancestors."

There was logic in this, so our friends simply nodded and rode on.

But they were keeping a sharp watch for danger just the same.

The roadways were hard and smooth and covered with a first dust which lessened the noise made by the hoofs of the horses and donkey considerable.

On rode the little party, marveling at the strange looking trees and vegetation they saw, until finally they came upon a camp at the roadside.

They paused here, for two-score of forms lay stretched out as though dead.

"They are our enemies!" said the Piute Princess in a whisper. "Let them be!"

"But I'd like to see whether they're dead or not," answered Cheyenne Charlie, dismounting.

"Go ahead, Charlie!" nodded our hero.

The scout made his way softly to the camp.

Then he could hear the snores of the men, which told him plainly that they were not dead.

He also saw the pails that had contained the stuff that

they had imbibed the night before, and then he knew just what was the matter.

"Well?" inquired Rippling Stream, as he came back.

"They're dead, all right," he answered; "but it's dead drunk."

The Piute Princess looked at him as though she did not quite understand him.

"They've been drinking some kind of liquor an' they're drunk," he repeated.

"Oh!"

"Drunk, eh?" said Young Wild West. "Well, it is the nature of some men to make beasts of themselves."

"It must have been fierce stuff to drink what was in them pails I seen," retorted the scout. "It smelled bad enough ter make a fellow dizzy, let alone ther taste of it."

"Well, they can sleep off the effects of the spree and we will go to the ruins of the ancient city and see what is to be found there," observed Jim Dart, as they rode on past the sleeping crowd.

A little further on and they could see that the road led straight into the city, there being no signs of the deep chasm there.

The Piute Princess urged her horse forward and now led the way.

Our hero and his partners allowed her to have a good lead over them, knowing that she would like it better if she was the first to set foot in the city.

Right to the big square in the center of the little but majestic looking place they rode, and when the princess drew rein and dismounted they waited for her to bid them follow her example.

This seemed to please her greatly, and stepping up, she took Wild by the hand and exclaimed:

"Welcome to the Lost Land of the ancient Piutes, Young Wild West! May your visit here be a pleasing one, and may you return safely to your own land when you have the desire."

"Thank you, Rippling Stream!" retorted the boy, raising his hat. "This is indeed a wonderful place, and I am very glad that you were kind enough to bring us here as your guests."

"I brought you here, my paleface brave, because I thought you were worthy of it," replied the girl, looking at him with a strange light in her eyes. "You saved my life at the risk of your own, and I shall never, never forget you for it."

"Don't mention it, princess. It was no more than doing my duty when I shot the chief and cut you loose. My ambition in life is to do good turns for the unfortunate, help those who need help, and punish the guilty. I have been very successful in my aim so far."

She looked at him as though she hardly knew how to take him, but said no more and turned to Charlie and Jim, bowing as they dismounted.

The scene that lay around them was certainly an impressive one.

There were probably fifty buildings in the group that made up what they chose to call a city, and all of them were built with an architectural design such as they had never seen before.

It was grand and imposing in the extreme—far above anything they had seen in the cities they had visited.

There was such an ancient look about it, too, that made it more impressive.

"They knew more about erecting stone buildings when this city was built than they do now," Wild remarked, after a rather lengthy pause.

"I reckon they did," spoke up Charlie. "An' yet the princess says her people done it. I didn't allow that an Injun knowed enough to build a log hut, let alone such grand lookin' buildings as these are."

"In those days they were a highly enlightened people," said Dart. "They have degenerated since that time."

"Well, I reckon they have. Say! This is wonderful, ain't it?" and the scout looked around him with genuine admiration depicted on his face.

"Wonderful is hardly a name for it," declared Jim.

"Well, we will take things as we find them," spoke up Young Wild West, in his cool, easy way. "Let's hunt around a bit and pick out a headquarters, where we will be able to keep off that rascally gang in case they take a notion to attack us."

Right back of them there was what showed signs of having been a courtyard.

The masonry was tumbling down, but the wings of the building that were built around it were in a good state of preservation.

CHAPTER X.

THE FINDING OF THE GOLD.

"That is as good a place as any," said Young Wild West, pointing to the courtyard. "We could make our headquarters right there—inside the building if we so desired."

"I think it would be a good thing to get inside," suggested Jim Dart. "If I mistake not, that was the palace when this city was inhabited."

"Yes, that was the palace of my forefathers, the kings!" exclaimed Rippling Stream. "Let us go inside and see what is to be found there."

The temptation to go inside was too great for Wild to resist, so he at once assented.

Leaving the horses standing near what had once been a bubbling fountain, they ascended the white stone steps, some of which were crumbled away.

The doors of the structure had rotted into nothingness long since, so there was nothing to stop them from going inside.

Into a broad hall they went, and as Cheyenne Charlie strode along his foot kicked a grinning skull and sent it rolling over the dust-covered floor.

"I didn't mean to do that," said the scout, looking at the princess.

"That makes no difference," she answered. "Bones are without feeling."

The strangers paused before a wide doorway and looked into a vast chamber.

The sight they saw was a dazzling one.

Lying on the stone floor amid a collection of decaying bones were urns, cups, plates and trays of virgin gold!

Young Wild West knew that they were of gold, since his judgment of the precious yellow metal could scarcely be questioned.

He simply gave a nod of satisfaction.

"I guess we have found something now," he remarked.

"I should say so!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie. "Well, I reckon ther fellers what used them things ter eat off of was a blamed sight more high-toned than we are. Jest look at that big thing there with ther two handles on it! I'll bet that would cost ten thousand dollars—that is, if it's solid gold."

"It is solid gold, all right enough," retorted Wild, stepping over to the urn the scout had pointed out. "That would be a fine thing to have on exhibition at the office of the Wild West Mining and Improvement Company at Weston, wouldn't it?"

"I should say it would!" cried Jim. "Did you ever see anything like it? Why, everything is gold, it seems."

Jim was about right, as far as the decorations and articles to be found in the chamber were concerned.

Stone work and articles of gold, with here and there a few human bones, were about all that had survived the vast period of time that had passed since the city was inhabited.

Young Wild West remained strangely cool as he looked about the wonderful place.

His action had a great effect on Charlie and Jim, too.

If they had suddenly come upon all that riches alone they might have acted like a couple of wild beings for a while; but since their dashing young leader was not losing his head over it, they held themselves down wonderfully.

The Piute Princess seemed to be taking things in a very matter-of-fact way.

She acted just as though it was nothing more than she had expected.

It suddenly occurred to our hero that the sleeping occupants of the camp at the roadside might have awakened by this time, and he hastened to a window—or what had been one, no doubt, for it was now simply an opening.

As Wild looked out in the direction they had come into the city from he saw a crowd of horsemen approaching.

They were those who had followed them to the Lost Land. "They are coming, boys!" he cried. "They have awakened, and they are now riding into the city."

"We'd better look out for our horses," said Jim. "If those fellows were to come across them they would be pretty sure to take them."

"That's right!" and Young Wild West led the way out of the building by the way they had entered it, which was not the main entrance, but more likely the back one.

When they got there they found that the crowd had turned in a direction which led toward the front of the imposing structure they had seen fit to enter.

As this edifice was the largest that was in the city, it was nothing strange that the Indians and whites should pick it out as the first place to visit.

"They must not get in there and touch the gold!" exclaimed the Piute Princess. "I have sworn that they should never have any of the gold of the Lost Land!"

"Well, I guess we can keep them out, then!" retorted Wild. "Just let me go through to the front of the building and talk to them. I'll tell them that this place is our headquarters, and that if they intend to remain here in the city they must choose some other place."

Rippling Stream nodded.

"I will go with you," she said, and then she followed the daring boy up the steps and through the broad hall to the front of the great stone structure.

The two got there just as the two-score of horsemen came to a halt.

"Good-morning, gentlemen!" exclaimed Young Wild West, stepping out into view. "What do you think of the ruined city of the Lost Land?"

His appearance was so sudden that the men glared at him in astonishment, and when the Indian princess appeared at his side the redskins uttered a shout.

"Get down and kiss the ground!" she said, in a ringing tone. "I am the ruler of the Lost Land, and I will be obeyed."

Some of the braves acted as though they were going to obey, and they would have done so, no doubt, if Crooked Tongue had not interfered.

"Don't mind her! She is but an impostor!" he said to them in the language of the tribe, which was the same as the princess had spoken in.

"What did she say?" asked Rudolph.

"She says that she is the ruler here, and that we must get down and kiss the ground, because she tells us to," answered Crooked Tongue.

"Well, I reckon we don't kiss no ground, do we, boys?"

"I reckon not!" was the reply.

Wild heard what they were talking about, and he felt that Rippling Stream had made a mistake in trying to force such an unreasonable thing upon them.

But it was too late for her to retract now.

If they refused to obey her it would show that, with all their superstition, they regarded her as no more than they were.

"If you don't do as Rippling Stream tells you to do," spoke up Young Wild West, "none of you will ever live to get back to your own land again."

"What have you got to say about it?" retorted Rudolph. "I reckon we've got as much right here as you have."

There was no doubt in the mind of our hero that this was correct, but he did not propose that the rascals should interfere with him and his friends.

And the moment they started to enter the building they would be interfering with them.

"See here!" exclaimed Wild, casting a sweeping glance at the horsemen before him, "if you fellows don't want to get into trouble you had better go on about your business. I guess I can arrange it with the princess that so long as you don't interfere with us we will let you alone. Now move away from here!"

"Not much we won't!" was the retort.

"You want trouble, then?"

"Well, when we git trouble some one else will be gittin' it, too, I reckon."

"That's true enough; but you will be the first one to die when the trouble starts, though."

As quick as a flash Wild brought his rifle to his shoulder and covered the villain.

"Now, then, ride away, or I'll drop you from the saddle!" he cried.

Rudolph looked around at his companions helplessly.

"You'd better move!" said one of the men.

"All right, then. You fellows come with me. We'll go to that big house over there. That looks as though it was just as likely to have their gold in it as this one does."

"Hurry!" he cried.

Rudolph turned his horse and headed for the big building

he had designated, his four men following him like so many dogs.

"Now, redskins!" said Wild, drawing a bead on Crooked Tongue, whom he easily recognized as their leader, "just follow the example of your paleface friends, or your chief will get a bullet through his heart, double-quick time!"

"The paleface with the long hair a heap much brave," exclaimed the Indian leader, as he pulled his horse around and obeyed the command. "He is a deadshot with a gun, but he would not dare fight Crooked Tongue with his knife."

"I dare to fight you in any way," was the reply. "You are afraid of me, redskin, and you know it. If you fight me it will be the last fight you ever have. Just think over what I say, now, and if you think you are ready to die, just say the word and we will fight!"

There was more about the easy manner of the boy than the words that affected the Indian leader.

Without another word he turned to his men and ordered them to ride away.

They followed quite willingly, but it was plain that they would just have enjoyed sending a bullet at Young Wild West.

The Indians were not any too well equipped, anyhow.

They had left the reservation in such a secret manner that they had been unable to get hold of any modern weapons, and they well knew that when they fired with the muzzle-loading rifles they would have little show to load them again.

Crooked Tongue had told them how straight the paleface boy with the long hair could shoot, and the majority of them had been present at the camp when the Piute Princess was rescued in such a daring manner.

Feats of courage and daring impress the red men more than anything else.

The braves rode over to the building Rudolph had selected in silence.

Rippling Stream looked at Young Wild West with a glow of admiration in her dark eyes as they went away.

"They will obey you, but not me," she said, quietly.

"Well, if they had not obeyed me some of them would have dropped," was the reply. "Now, I guess they won't bother us for a while, so we may be able to rig up some kind of a place for our horses, if we intend to stay here any length of time."

"You would not stay here always, then?" questioned Rippling Stream, looking at him strangely.

"Not if I can help it, princess," he replied, laughing lightly, though it was forced.

"I could stay here always and be happy," she said, "if—if—"

"Well, never mind, Rippling Stream. Don't talk that way just now. We must look to our safety, first of all, and then we will look up the gold that is to be found in this temple, or whatever it is."

"It is a temple!" she retorted, coming back to her former manner. "It is the temple of my forefathers, and the gold that is in it belongs to me. I freely give it all to Young Wild West and his two brave friends who came here with me."

"Thank you," and Wild laughed in an amused way. "I shall be pleased to take as much as I can carry of the gold away, but as far as accepting it all goes, that would be folly. We could only carry so much, though——" and he paused and looked thoughtful.

"We might come back and get it," he answered.

"No!" exclaimed the Piute Princess, shaking her head. "You could never come back, for when Young Wild West leaves the Lost Land to return to his home the way shall be closed, so that no one shall ever get here. The Princess of the Piutes will have it so!"

"All right, then, Rippling Stream. Just keep cool, won't you? Please don't get excited. You make me feel strange when you get off like that. Take it easy, now. When we go back to my home you shall go with us, if you like, and you will find a warm welcome there and plenty of friends to sit and talk with you and make things pleasant for you. Who knows but that some fine looking young brave may come along and offer you his heart and hand? Then you could settle down and live happy the rest of your life."

"If my heart was with the brave," she answered.

"Well, don't let us talk about hearts just now. I——"

"Is there no maiden who has your heart, Young Wild West?" interrupted the girl.

Wild thought a moment.

"Yes," he answered. "There is a golden haired girl in my

own town who has my heart, Rippling Stream. She will be my wife some day."

"It is well, Young Wild West," was all she said, and that was the end of it for the time.

"The paleface with the long hair a heap much brave!" ex-

CHAPTER XI.

THE INDIANS ARE LESSENERED IN NUMBER.

Rudolph, the leader of the whites, was in a morose frame of mind when he dismounted before the ruins of the big building he had decided to enter.

But he had scarcely entered the crumbling portals when his manner changed as if by magic.

There was nothing strange about this, since almost the first object his eyes rested upon was a huge golden urn that rested on the stone floor, as though to receive the offerings of those who came in.

"Hurrah!" he yelled. "Come on, boys! I reckon this place is just as good as that one Young Wild West an' ther Piute Princess has taken charge of! Here's gold, boys! Plenty of it, too."

His followers crowded in, and then came the Indians, all of whom knew what gold was and what use it could be put to.

For the next half hour there was a scene in the ruins of that particular edifice that baffles description.

Vessels of virgin gold were found in all parts of it, and the white men almost went delirious with joy, while the Indians did one of their dances.

It was not until each individual had picked out his own particular piece of gold that anything like quiet began to reign.

Then Crooked Tongue sought out Rudolph and said:

"We have found more gold than we can carry away. What is the best thing to do now?"

"Kill Young Wild West an' ther rest of 'em, an' then use their horses ter cart some more of ther stuff erway with us."

The redskin nodded in the affirmative.

"That is good!" he said. "But how shall we kill Young Wild West? He will not let us kill him."

"S'pose you fight him with knives, as you spoke to him about? As soon as we see ye're gittin' ther best of him we'll shoot ther other two fellers, an' then if you ain't able ter finish him one of us kin step up behind an' help yer."

Crooked Tongue shook his head.

"If I fight with Young Wild West it must be a fair fight," he said. "I must kill him, or he must kill me. I am not a coward."

"I didn't think you was," and Rudolph tried to smooth over that part of it that had offended his ally.

"I will fight Young Wild West," went on the Indian, "because I hate him and want his life. I will send a brave to tell him so now."

"Good enough! If you don't put an end to him I'll be mighty much mistaken."

"If I don't kill him he kill me."

"And what then?"

"Rudolph must fight him, then."

"All right. I'll soon fix him if I get a square chance at him."

Crooked Tongue acted as though he did not believe this.

But he said nothing, and at once went to send a messenger to Young Wild West, to let him know that he was ready to meet him with knives and fight out the grudge they had.

The Indian did not doubt in the least that he could win in the fight, and he thought it would be the means of giving him more prestige with his followers if he went out and fought the young fellow and won.

The brave who bore the message to Wild carried a flag of truce as he approached the temple-like structure.

He was promptly admitted to the courtyard.

In about ten minutes he came back with the report that Young Wild West would meet Crooked Tongue in the square, mounted on his horse and with only a knife to defend himself with.

"All right," replied the Indian in his own language. "It shall be a fight to the death, and I shall win."

As he hastened away to get ready for the combat the villain Gabe turned to his white companion, and said:

"I wouldn't be surprised if that'll be ther end of Mister

Crooked Tongue. That young feller wouldn't be fool enuff ter fight him if he wasn't a regular cracker at ther game. You jest wait an' see if I ain't right."

"All right; we'll wait," answered one of them. "But I hope ther Injun does fix him, though. I don't feel near as safe here as I would if Young Wild West wasn't here."

"Oh, I feel safe enough," spoke up Rudolph. "But I do think that since Young Wild West and his two pardes killed three of our men we ought to fix them for it. We ought to revenge ther death of our comrades, boys."

"That's right!" cried Gabe.

Then all agreed upon it.

Meanwhile Crooked Tongue was making great preparations to show off in the combat.

Something of the spirit of his ancient forefathers had come upon him, and he wanted to impress it upon his fellowers that he was the greatest man ever born among them.

He went about among them trying to impress them that none but the bravest of the men would dare to meet Young Wild West single-handed.

Though there were several among them who thought differently, they said nothing.

The fact of it was that the Indians thought Crooked Tongue was trying to work a scheme whereby he might get a larger share of the gold than the rest of them, and they did not believe much of what he said about Young Wild West.

But all of them wanted to see the boy with the long hair fall, for they felt that he stood in their way.

Finally Crooked Tongue went out and mounted his horse, and rode slowly toward the center of the square.

Our hero had been waiting for him to appear.

He had been a little surprised when he received the challenge to fight the Indian, and he thought that there might be treachery behind it.

So he arranged it with Charlie and Jim to stand in readiness to shoot down the first one who offered to interfere.

As Crooked Tongue brought his horse to a halt in the center of the square Wild rode out of the courtyard on his spirited sorrel.

He had removed both revolvers from his belt, but one of them he had thrust in his hip pocket, in case there was treachery on foot.

"Crooked Tongue!" he called out, "is this going to be a fair fight?"

"It is!" came the answer.

"None of your friends are going to interfere, then?"

"No."

"Well, what are we going to fight for, then? If I drop you, what do I get?"

"My horse," replied the Indian. "If you kill me you take my horse, and if I kill you I want your horse."

"Oh, all right, then. But you are a very foolish Indian, I can tell you. You might better take what you want from this place and go back to the mountains and rolling prairie. If you fight me you will never have the chance to go, for I will drop you, just as sure as you are a redskin."

"Young Wild West heap much wind!" was the reply. "Crooked Tongue will kill him; then he will take the horse to carry his gold away from the Lost Land."

"It sounds real nice the way you tell it. But, Crooked Tongue, there are better Indians than you are who tried to kill me with a knife. They never did it, either. Are you ready?"

"Yes," was the reply, and then the brave let his horse come forward at a sharp trot.

Confident of success, our hero rode to meet him.

He knew that it was inevitable that he must kill the brave. That was the only way to get out of the difficulty.

Crooked Tongue meant to take his life, so it was the proper thing to finish him.

By doing this he would put a check on the rest of the gang, too.

The two horses sped toward each other with great tact.

They had been in such places before, both of them.

Then the fight began, while the Piute Princess and Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart looked on from one side, and the five villainous white men and the Indians were spectators from the other.

Crooked Tongue knew a great deal about fighting with a knife on horseback.

He had won more than one battle in that manner.

But before he had been at it a minute he realized that he had at last met some one who knew every play in the game.

Back and forth the horses leaped and plunged, and at every move the Indian did his best to strike Young Wild West with his knife.

But it was of no avail.

The lockers-on, from both sides, knew it, too.

For five minutes they kept it up, and then the redskin suddenly changed his tactics.

He thrust his knife in his belt, and pulling a tomahawk from somewhere beneath his clothing, he urged his horse toward Young Wild West.

"Ah!" cried our hero. "So that is your game, is it? Well, all right."

By a quick movement he caused the sorrel to jump aside, and then, as the tomahawk missed his head by nearly a foot, he reached over and dealt the blow that settled the fight.

Crooked Tongue gave a gasping cry and slid down from the back of his horse.

"There!" cried Young Wild West, facing the crowd on the other side and shouting so his words could be heard. "The Indian went back on his word to fight fair, but it made no difference. If there are any more of you who think you know something about fighting just come on! I am ready for you all! If you agree to use revolvers, I will take two of you at a time."

This was said as a sort of bluff by our hero, because he knew that such talk would be apt to impress them just then.

Wild did not bother about taking the slain Indian's horse, so a few minutes later one of the redskins appeared with a flag of truce and asked if he might take the animal.

"Go ahead and take him," was the reply.

The horse was caught, and then the brave led him over to where the rest of them were, leaving the body of Crooked Tongue where it fell.

"I told yer what would happen," said Gabe, when it was all over. "Now, who's goin' ter be ther next ter tackle Young Wild West; you, Rudolph?"

"I reckon not," was the quick reply. "I might tackle him if I got the right kind of chance, but I ain't goin' ter do it facin' him."

The fate of the Indian leader put a sort of damper on some of the gold seekers.

But the others did not seem to care much about it.

The Indians elected a new leader very promptly, and then two braves were sent to get the body of Crooked Tongue and give it decent burial.

After this had been done the brave who had been elected a chief held a consultation with their white allies.

After a lengthy talk it was decided that they should get together all they could carry of the gold and leave the place.

Then, when they got out of the passage, they would camp there and wait for Young Wild West and his friends to come.

When they did come they would be slaughtered, and what they brought with them would be taken by the gang.

It was a plan that they all agreed to.

It looked to be the easiest way out of it.

"When do yer think will be ther best time to leave?" asked Rudolph.

"To-night," replied the chief. "Then when the daylight shines again we will be out of here."

"Good!"

When they had cooked and eaten a hearty meal the villains decided to take a look in more of the houses.

They hunted through a number, and found more or less golden images and urns in them.

But the greatest find of all was in the ruins of a big, imposing edifice right on the shore of the lake.

Through a crevice in the mass of rock that had fallen upon it they saw an enormous amount of gold in little bars, just convenient to carry away.

The Indians who made the discovery concluded to get the gold.

They got together all the powder they had with them and arranged to blow up the place.

Then they would have their own way about getting the treasure, they thought.

The powder was placed where it would be liable to bring about the desired result when it exploded, and then the redskins lit a fuse and ran.

There were just six of them who were in the scheme, and they did not know that nearly all the rest of their crowd had been suspicious that they were up to something, and that they had entered the building just before the fuse was lighted.

But those who had been watch the six knew nothing of the powder and fuse.

And they never did know, for the next minute a heavy explosion rang out, killing them instantly, and throwing the biggest portion of the ruined building into the lake.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Immediately after his fight with Crooked Tongue, Young Wild West called his partners aside and said:

"I think the quicker we get away from this place the better it will be for us. That gang surely mean to put an end to us if they can, and if we leave it to them to go away first we will be doomed to stay here forever, as they will surely fix it so we can't get out through the passage.

"Jest say ther word an' we'll go!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie.

"Is the Piute Princess willing to leave so soon?" asked Jim.

"I hardly think so," replied Wild. "She seems to want to stay here forever. The fact of it, Jim, is that she has been foolish enough to fall in love with me, because I saved her life, I suppose, and she has got so romantic as to think that it would be nice for me to marry her and live here with her until we died. I told her that I had a sweetheart, after she had asked me, and sice that she has been acting rather strangely.

"I have noticed it," replied Jim. "I knew right along that she was in love with you. If she had not been she would never have conducted us to this strange place, when she refused her own people the privilege of coming to it."

"Well, just fill up your pockets and saddle-bags with as much of the gold as we can conveniently take away with us, and be ready to go at a moment's notice. The princess is now up in one of the windows keeping a watch on the movements of our enemies. One thing, they can't leave the city without passing so we can see them."

The three started in and packed the gold plates and other smaller things into their saddle-bags and filled their pockets—not so it interfered with their movements to any great extent—and then prepared to wait.

They found food for their horses and let them feed to their hearts' content.

Wild waited a long while before he concluded to go and broach the subject of their leaving to the Piute Princess.

He knew their enemies must have an idea of going soon, for he took note of the fact that they were ransacking all the ruined buildings not in their immediate neighborhood.

They did not want to run the risk of coming too close to Young Wild West, evidently.

Wild found Rippling Stream standing in one of the galleries, leaning over a window sill and apparently watching the movements of her people and the white villains with them.

She turned when she heard him approaching and smiled sadly.

"Rippling Stream," said our hero, "it will not do for us to stay here. We must leave the Lost Land before our enemies go away. They are making ready to go now, and if we wait to follow them they will never let us get out alive."

"Young Wild West will go away with his two friends, but the Piute Princess will remain here," was the calm rejoinder.

"Don't talk like that, princess!" exclaimed the boy, who had expected to hear her say something of the kind.

"Rippling Stream has spoken," was all she said.

"All right!" exclaimed Young Wild West; "but when we get ready to leave the Piute Princess goes with us."

She smiled, as though his voice was music to her ears, and then turned her gaze from him.

Our hero went down-stairs and reported what she had said to his companions.

"I guess we will have a time of it getting her to leave with us," he said. "I hate to leave without her, though, and I don't mean to, either."

"No," said Jim. "We shouldn't if there is any way to prevent it."

Cheyenne Charlie shook his head.

"That Injun gal is goin' daffy," he remarked, in a whisper. "I kin tell it easy. I've seen 'em act that way before."

Just then a loud explosion rang out.

It was the blowing-up of the ruined building on the shore of the lake that they heard.

As our three friends ran out into the courtyard they saw the smoke of the explosion, and wondering what it all meant, they waited for it to clear away, to see what had happened.

Much to their surprise, Rippling Stream came out of the building and stood by them.

"What was it?" she asked.

"I don't know," answered Wild; "but I think our enemies must have caused it."

"The whole pile of ruins fell over in the water," she went on. "I was watching, and I saw it go. Over twenty of my people went in, and six came out. Then there was a bang, and they all go to their death!"

"A mighty good thing," muttered Charlie, but not loud enough for her to hear.

"Well, it is time for us to go now. Are you ready?"

"Yes," she said, much to his surprise.

Jim ran and brought her horse and donkey over.

The Piute Princess got into the saddle before he could assist her, and then taking the bridle-rein of the long-eared consort, nodded for Wild to lead the way.

"Boys," said our hero, as he started for the roadway, "we are not staying a great while in the Lost Land, but plenty long enough for me, though."

"An' me, too!" echoed Cheyenne Charlie.

The Piute Princess was just going to say something when a strange roaring, bubbling sound came to their ears.

"What's that?" cried the scout, holding his head in a listening attitude.

"I don't think we ought to wait to investigate!" declared Jim Dart.

"No!" said Wild. "Come on!"

They started off at a sharp trot, and when they reached the place where the road turned from the ruined city they saw a strange phenomenon.

The water in the lake was boiling up in a huge geyser right where the ruined building had toppled into it.

But that was not all.

The water was rising perceptibly all over its surface.

"If we stay here we will be drowned out, in my opinion," said Wild. "Just see that water rising up! That explosion must be responsible for it."

"That's what!" echoed Cheyenne Charlie. "My! Jest look at that!"

Another fountain of water burst up about a hundred feet from the other and there was a mighty roar, as though a flood was coming.

The faces of our friends turned pale.

But the princess only smiled.

When the rest started to ride away she remained still in the saddle.

"Come on!" cried Wild.

"No!" she answered. "My bones shall lie with those of my ancestors!"

"Don't be foolish, Rippling Stream! Come on, before it is too late! See! The water is rising fast. In a few minutes it will swallow us right here on this spot!"

At this juncture the clatter of hoofs was heard, and casting a swift glance toward the city our friends saw two white men and an Indian riding hard to escape the rising waters.

When the Piute Princess saw them she uttered a shrill yell of defiance and rode to meet them.

She had drawn her hunting knife, and as she met the Indian brave she plunged it into his breast.

But even as he did it a tomahawk came down upon her stately head.

Both dropped, and almost screaming with terror at what was taking place, the two white men sped onward to escape the roaring water.

Young Wild West and his two partners were riding swiftly along the winding road for their lives.

The sight of the ending of the life of the Piute Princess was a sickening one, and something they could never forget.

But they had been unable to prevent it.

Young Wild West might have fired a shot that would have dropped the Indian had he known what was going to take place.

But he did not know it.

The road over which they were riding was about level, and Wild knew that the water would follow them if it kept on rising.

But they had a good start on it, and on they rode until they reached the place where the passage began.

As they got there they found the water had risen from the lake above the bank—exactly a distance of ten feet—and it was with no little difficulty that they got safely over the stream, in order to ride up through the passage.

As they turned into the darkness they heard a sharp cry behind them, and then there was a sound of hoofs.

There had been two horses following them, but there was only one now.

That one was ridden by the villain, Gabe.

It was Rudolph that had perished in crossing the natural bridge that was submerged.

Gabe was the sole survivor of those who had followed our friends to the Lost Land.

But even now he was afraid to join them and tell them that he was sorry for what he had done against them.

He kept within hearing of them, stopping when they did, and going on when they did.

Meanwhile Young Wild West and his partners were making their way through the tunnel-like passage without any light.

The ride back to the end of the passage did not seem near as long as when they came through it, and just ten hours from the time of their start the party emerged from the opening in the rocky wall.

It was raining hard and dark as pitch when they got out.

But they did not mind the rain.

They would much rather be drenched in that way than to run their chances in such a flood as they had left behind them in the Lost Land.

As our three friends got out of the passage they halted and waited for the man behind them to appear.

He came out in less than two minutes.

"It are all right, boys!" he cried. "Don't kill me! I'm ther last one of ther lot! Let me go, won't yer?"

"Certainly we will let you go!" retorted Young Wild West. "I guess you have seen enough in the last couple of days to make you a better man."

"That's right, Young Wild West. I'm going ter be an honest man now, an' I'm goin' ter mind my own business. I've got a couple of thousand dollars' worth of gold on my horse. I guess, an' I'm goin' ter start out anew with it. Good-by!"

At that very moment there was an ominous sound above them.

"Hide for your lives!" cried Young Wild West. "There is a landslide coming down the mountain!"

The four were not a moment too soon, either.

Down came thousands of tons of dirt right upon the spot where they had emerged from the passage.

"Well, ther skeletons are buried now, anyhow."

As Cheyenne Charlie said this he nodded as though he was satisfied.

They got out of the ravine and reached the cave they had occupied the night before they started on the journey with the Piute Princess.

Gabe refused to stop with them, and once more bidding them good-by, he went on his way.

Young Wild West and his two partners got back to Weston in due time and sold the gold for a big price.

They got back just a week from the time they started.

This was much sooner than they had expected.

Tom Mercer was still in town, as he had found work there.

He asked them how they had made out, but they did not tell him of their thrilling adventures.

"We have had quite enough of the trip," was all Wild said.

But to those whom they loved best they told all about the Piute Princess and how she had led them to the Lost Land.

"Arietta," said Young Wild West to his pretty, gold-haired sweetheart, "the Piute Princess was foolish enough to fall in love with me, and that is why she took us on the underground trail with her. But never once did I forget you, little one, and when I told her about you she simply just made up her mind to die in the Lost Land, and she did so. It was about the most wonderful trip I ever made, and I can't say that I want to take another one like it. Give me the surface of the ground and plenty of excitement all the time!"

Next week's issue will contain "YOUNG WILD WEST'S COWBOY CARNIVAL; OR, THE ROUND-UP AT ROARING RANCH."

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE

CURRENT NEWS

One of the largest sturgeons that has ever been caught in the Delaware River as far upstream as this was taken, netted, then roped by George Saxton and Anthony Shores, of Bristol, Pa., who were fishing for shad. The very lively seven-foot fish gave them a hard tussle before it was landed, and then it was discovered to weigh 250 pounds.

A human skeleton disappeared from the barn of County Physician W. C. Loomis, of Wichita, Kan. It had just been purchased by the county official and was not "set up"; the pieces were in a sack. It was valued at \$20. Police are examining junk yards in the belief that the skeleton has been sold as old bones.

A school for deep-sea diving has been started at the Torpedo Station, Newport, R. I. It is in charge of Comdr. John K. Robinson, U. S. N., with Gunners C. L. Tibbals and J. C. Heck. Narragansett Bay will be used in the training, with launches from the station, and it has a depth of 150 feet. When additional depths are required such can be obtained just outside the entrance to the bay.

Declaring that his good looks are ruined by having his mustache burned off in an explosion, Dr. W. S. Galloway, of Henderson, Ky., is seeking to collect \$600 from an insurance company in which he was carrying an accident policy. The doctor feels his loss quite keenly, for he spent twenty years in growing the hirsute adornment, which he succeeded in coaxing out to a length of nine inches from tip to tip.

Wonderful advance is being registered in the shipbuilding industry in the United States. Never have so many keels been laid or such a wide diversity in construction been reported. Fifteen years ago the average tonnage in the yards of the United States was 200,000 yearly. There are now more than 1,000,000 tons under contract in American shipyards, the value of the work representing considerably more than \$100,000,000.

With two toes amputated that he might pass an entrance examination to West Point, Harold De Forest, of Wetmore, has been discharged from a hospital in Atchison, Kan. The operation was performed two weeks ago, and De Forest, who also attended Midland College, left for his home. He had what is known as "hammer toes," that is, two toes were drawn back and wouldn't straighten out. Those two toes wouldn't pass the examination, and he was promised admittance in case the toes were amputated.

Scrambling out of the pond adjoining the local Milwaukee switching yards, Otto Sincx, a Mitchell, S. Dak., youngster, snatched his little sister off a railroad track in time to save her life. While her brother was in swimming the little girl was amusing herself throwing pebbles at him from the track. The boy happened to look up and saw a long freight train coming up the track on which his sister was playing. She did not heed him when he called in alarm, and he just managed to reach her and jump into the water with her when the engine passed the spot.

As a result of the shortage of dye-stuffs caused by the war, the market for a Porto Rican product known as annatto—the seed of a tree yielding a yellow coloring matter—has suddenly increased greatly. Before the war there was little demand for it, but in view of the fact that it may be used as a substitute for the regular dye-stuffs now lacking, the exports of annatto from Porto Rico have risen by leaps and bounds in quantity and value. Whereas, in ordinary times annatto sold as low as \$4 and \$5 per 100 pounds, it now commands as much as \$15 for the same quantity. The annatto tree grows wild and the collection of the seeds is a source of income to numerous country folk. The seeds are used for coloring silk, cotton, wool, confectionery, butter, cheese, sauces, varnishes, lacquer, etc. The local Porto Rican name for the product is "achiote." If the present "boom" continues it may bring about the planting of the trees on a large scale.

Patent papers were recently granted to Isadore Kitsee, a Philadelphia inventor, covering a process for the destruction of insect and germ life harmful to plants and trees, the electrical method taking the place, to a great extent, of the usual sprays and other applications. The process consists of making an application of a solution such as saline water where the ground is to be treated, and then causing a current of electricity to be passed through the soil, whereupon the gas generated will rid the soil of germs, larvae and insects without the least injury to the vegetation. Where a larger area is to be treated, it has been found desirable to dig shallow trenches at opposite sides of the area to be treated, and the electric terminals are placed in these. An application of a somewhat more powerful current will rid the entire area of pests. When the plant itself is to be treated, the solution carrying the element is made with electrolyte in an apparatus, and the plant sprayed with a solution after decomposition has taken place through the action of the electric current.

Two Boys From Toughtown

OR

BOUND TO WORK THEIR CLAIM

By "PAWNEE JACK"

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XIV.

TOM SHOWS THE BIG BOOMERS HOW THE TOUGHTOWN BOYS CAN SHOOT.

"Oh, it isn't that," said Tom. "You don't think for a minute that I'd go butting in with a lot of fellows like that bunch if it wasn't for a purpose. If I can turn fifty into Judge Jaggars' pocket, it's a starter, and may lead to just what we want. You stand right here."

And Tom walked across the street to the miners, saying:

"Is it me you are talking about, gentlemen? I don't take a back stand on my shooting for any man. I'm ready to show you what I can do right now."

"By jingo, that's ther talk!" cried Judge Jaggars, staggering up to Tom and seizing his hand. "Another dead game sport. You're the sort of feller I like to meet. Kin yer shoot, boy? Kin yer shoot?"

"Well, Judge," replied Tom, shaking hands, "I haven't got as much money in my shoot as you have, probably, but I've got a twenty to back any man's ten-spot that I can do just as you say."

"Hit the bull's-eye on the gallop!" demanded Budd Franks. "Is that what you mean?"

"That's what I mean."

"I'll take yer."

"How about me?" cried the judge, thickly.

"Oh, I'll take you, too, judge," replied the miner, and then without any apparent reason there was a roar.

Tom let them go on with their joshing till they were tired.

Then they began to talk business.

Indeed, it was the judge who brought them to it.

He picked out a little broncho for Tom to ride, and our hero promptly mounted and announced himself ready for the test.

"Say, by thunder, we don't know your name," broke in the judge. "We want to know who we are doing business with before we begin."

"Bill Smith," said Tom, with a grin.

"Don't believe it. I can tell by you're eye that you are fooling me, boy."

"Hold on, judge! Hold on! You're backing the game; let the money talk, and the boy has put his'n up!" broke in Budd Franks.

"Time!" cried Steve Sanders.

Tom brought matters to a head by riding off down-street to the point arranged for the start.

Joe watched him from over by the Rattlesnake.

He felt sure that Tom would win.

Joe had seen him shoot before, but Tom's neat work was a revelation to the gang, who were whooping things up in Big Boom City that day.

He made no noise and bluster, nor put on any fancy frills.

As Tom dashed past the Rattlesnake hotel, up went his rifle and the bull's-eye of the target on the roof was neatly plugged.

Wild cheers went up; the judge waved his old plug hat and made a drunken attempt to dance a jig.

Joe, from the other side of the way, cheered with the rest.

He thought it was all over, but Tom was just getting warmed up to his work.

He was determined to let these toughs see how rifles talked in Toughtown.

He rode down-street as far as Riley's blacksmith shop, wheeled around and came dashing back again.

Before he came opposite the Rattlesnake he threw up his rifle and fired, firing again as he passed the saloon.

Both times he plugged the bull's-eye, and then making another quick turn by the Banner House, he came back, plugged it again and, dropping from the saddle, turned the broncho over to Budd Franks, to whom it belonged, amid deafening cheers.

Tom had captured the crowd.

The judge was jubilant, of course, and, in fact, everybody wanted to shake hands with the sturdy fellow who had displayed such skill with the rifle.

The stakeholder turned his fifty over to the judge and Tom got his ten.

Then Joe was brought over and introduced. More betting was now in order, and Budd Franks tried a shot in the same way.

He was able to make one bull's-eye out of five, but that was all.

Others tried it, some failing outright, others scoring a point or two.

Then all hands adjoined to the Rattlesnake, and the drinking began again.

Tom and Joe refused to join them in this.

"It's no use, gentlemen, we don't drink, and that's all there is about it," declared Tom.

There was no one insisting beyond a little urging at the start.

Before he pulled away from the gang the judge caught Tom by the hand and shook it heartily.

"I want to see more of you, young feller," he said. "Come to my office at eleven o'clock, will you? I owe you one, and I'll pay it, too."

He gave Tom a wise look and followed the gang into the saloon.

"He knows us, all right, Tom," said Joe.

"I guess that's right," replied Tom. "Well, I know him now, and I guess I can work him; only trouble is, he won't be in any kind of shape to do business at eleven o'clock this day."

But Tom was altogether mistaken. He did not know Judge Jaggars yet.

The boys now went to the Banner House and engaged a room.

Here they were known to the clerk, as they had stopped there before, so they registered under their own names.

It would have been impossible to conceal their identity, and Tom did not propose to try.

After breakfast he had some talk with the landlord about Billy Francis.

The landlord gave the young Wells Fargo agent a splendid reputation, winding up by pronouncing him the squarest fellow in Big Boom City, which he declared was saying a good deal.

"And what kind of a man is Judge Jaggars?" asked Tom, suddenly.

"Oh, don't ask me that," he replied.

The landlord laughed.

"The judge is an old-timer and likes his toddy, but he isn't such a hard man to do business with if you handle him right."

Then the landlord winked and poked Tom in the ribs.

"It'll be a blamed sight better for you to have him for a friend than an enemy," he added, as he walked away.

"That means graft," said Joe.

"I suppose it does," replied Tom, "but in a case like this one, we can't be too squeamish. Lucky Strike belongs to us, and we are bound to work it. We have simply got to down the Bannister bunch, at any cost."

So at eleven o'clock Tom and Joe went to the Navajo Block, prepared to beard the lion in his den, or, in other words, to talk business with Judge Jaggars, whatever the outcome might be.

CHAPTER XV.

JUGGLING WITH JUDGE JAGGERS.

We have said before that Tom did not know Judge Jaggars, and such was the case.

The judge was one of that sort of drinkers who can whoop it up all night and then, after a few hours' sleep, be, to all appearances, perfectly able to attend to business.

When he went into the Rattlesnake, the judge drank only seltzer, and then adjourned to his office for a nap.

When, at eleven o'clock, the boys rapped on the door, the judge bawled "Come in!" and they found him sitting at his desk, sober enough to all appearances and perfectly well able to talk straight.

"Say," he began, "you are old Tom Graniss' son. I know you."

"I was sure you did," replied Tom, "but I didn't want to give my name out before that bunch. I

know that I've got enemies in these parts, and under such circumstances the best thing a fellow can do is to lie low."

"You are dead right, boy," said the judge. "I see you are as slick a talker as you are a good hand at a rifle. Now then, what do you want with me?"

"I don't know that I want anything with you, Judge Jaggars," replied Tom, warily. "You asked me to call on you, and here I am."

"Just so," said the judge. "Well, you started in to work that prospect of your father's up on Coyote Creek. What brings you back again? Have you failed to find any gold?"

"We found gold, all right, and the claim a good one."

"I know that. Got any samples with you?"

Tom produced one or two specimens of the ore taken from the vein up the ravine.

The judge took a magnifying glass out of his pocket and examined the ore critically.

"That's rich stuff," he said. "Is there plenty more like it up there?"

"Plenty."

"How about the placer diggings along the creek?"

"We are satisfied that there is something to be made out of those, too."

"Then why didn't you stay there and work your claim?"

"You don't have to ask, Judge Jaggars," replied Tom, looking the man full in the eye.

The judge gave a chuckling laugh.

"Too much Bill Bannister," he said, with a knowing wink.

"That's about the size of it. We don't want to have to fight every fifteen minutes. What we want to do is to get a chance to work our claim."

"Just so," said the judge, "but when Bill Bannister claims to own your claim, it becomes a question of what can you do about it but fight."

"My father did the assessment work, all right, and I have his affidavit to prove it."

"You have, eh?"

"I have."

"With you?"

"Yes, with me."

"Will you let me see it?"

"Certainly. What we want is legal help to put down the claims of this fellow Bannister once and for all, and we are willing to pay for it, too."

Then Tom produced his father's affidavit, which bore the names of two witnesses to prove that the regular assessment work required by law had been done on the Lucky Strike.

He did this not without some misgivings, it is true, for if the judge should take a notion to destroy the paper, his last hold would be gone, and he realized that he might find it extremely difficult to prove any charge he might bring against this man.

But Judge Jaggars was not in the mood for any such treachery.

He glanced over the paper and handed it back to Tom.

"Has this been recorded?" he asked, abruptly.

"Yes, sir," replied Tom.

"Why didn't you come and show me this before?"

"I didn't suppose it was necessary."

(To be continued)

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

TOOK CHAIN AND AUTO.

Harry Gascho, of Alexandria, Ind., drove to Anderson recently in an automobile to attend a circus. He had heard of automobile thieves following a circus, so he took with him a large log chain, and when at the circus left his machine fastened with the chain and a huge lock. When he returned from the afternoon performance lock, chain and automobile were gone. The police here believe the car was taken to a small town in Illinois and sold.

TORPEDO DEFENSE FOR BATTLESHIPS.

The ever-increasing power and range of the torpedo and the inability of the net to stop these terrible weapons have called for some permanent defense, exterior to the ship, which may be carried when the ship is traveling at high speed. A substitute for the net is found in providing a fixed outer shell conforming to the contour of the ship's sides and carried several feet distant from the hull, the water being free to pass between the shell and the hull. This construction has been used on the new British monitors.

WOMAN ROPES ALLIGATOR.

Mrs. Will Hendricks, of Warton, Tex., is receiving the congratulations of her friends over having performed the unusual feat of capturing alive a large alligator. One evening recently she noticed the alligator trying to climb the hog wire fence of the L. O. Ireson pasture, and she ran home and brought a rope with which she lassoed the reptile and tied it to a post. Those who were attracted to the spot to view the catch stated that the alligator was over six feet long, and that it fought desperately to make its escape.

MANHOLE LID AS JUNK.

Alton (Ill.) city officials are having unusual trouble trying to keep the lid on. In addition to the occasional tilting of the "Sunday lid," there has now arisen a new class of offenders who are lifting lids of sewer and other manholes and carting them away to be sold as junk. One of the manhole lids weighs twenty pounds, and in view of the high price of metal because of the war was sold at an attractive price.

Several cases of theft of manhole lids have been reported to City Engineer T. H. Landon, who is conning his brain to devise some way of forestalling the activities of the thieves.

BOY PLAYS PIANO WELL WITH ONE HAND.

Those of you who can play the piano know how hard it is to play difficult music with the left hand, even if one has the use of all his fingers. So the

case of Kenneth Thomas, a Brooklyn boy, who has fingers on his right hand only, and yet plays excellently, is somewhat remarkable. It would be still more interesting to hear and see him play. Recently he played at a musicale given by his teacher. Several pupils sang and played besides young Thomas, but he was the most accomplished of any of them. As his teacher said in a little speech before Kenneth Thomas played two pieces by Sinding, the well-known composer, it was hard enough to play them with ten fingers, let alone five. The boy has to be taught in a different manner from other pupils.

Blind people often become pianists, but it is very much easier to play with two hands, even if one is blind, than with one hand if one can see.

A QUEER HOME DISCOVERED.

Near the little town of Garbe, Okla., in the heart of the wheat belt and among the finest country homes of the State, is a most unique residence. It was occupied for many years by one of the pioneer citizens of the State.

Later this man, S. H. Peters, built a fine house on the spot, and the falling of a cement porch the other day exposed the former queer home. Under this porch was a cave. It is said that this cave was dug in 1894. At a point along a little ravine a sandstone ledge cropped out, and there Peters tunneled out and excavated two large rooms with a sandstone ledge about three feet thick for a roof. The rooms extended sixty feet under the ground, and at the deepest place there was about seven or eight feet of dirt on top. To the back room a skylight, three by nine feet, was opened.

The rooms were plastered and white-coated, and the rock roof was whitewashed, making it light enough for one to read newspapers in any part of the cave. It was very dry at that time, and groceries kept in the cave perfectly. Peters and his family lived there for a long time before he built a home aboveground.

The stovepipe ran up the skylight, and to persons passing along the road the smoke coming out of the ground was a novel sight. Hundreds of persons visited this cave home, and all wondered why the roof didn't fall in, as it was not supported by timbers.

When the wet years came, a little spring in the cave, which furnished all the water for the family, overflowed the rooms at times, and in recent years, when the drain became clogged, the cave filled with water. It took Peters no longer to dig the cave than to build a sod house, like most of the pioneers used to do. The plaster was the only expense to the cave home.

TAKING HIS CHANCES

OR

THE BOY WHO GOT ON

By DICK ELLISON

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XXI.—(Continued.)

"Then when dangers assailed us, and you stood by me so bravely, I grew fonder of you than ever, and knew that the friendship between us was something that must last forever, that we were meant for each other, and——"

She suddenly paused, blushing crimson, and hastily added:

"Oh, I did not mean to say that. I forgot that—well, we shall always be good friends, shan't we, Bob?"

"Yes, indeed," returned Bob, heartily, but he knew now that he and Jack would be more than friends, that theirs would not be simply the friendship of two boys, one for the other, but the lasting love of a man and his wife.

Jack's jealousy and many other things which had seemed strange were now clear to him, and he saw that she had loved him from the first, and that he had returned the feeling without knowing it.

"It is a strange story," said Effie, who knew now that she and Bob could only be friends, "and I never suspected the truth. I took you for two boys who were very fond of each other, and thought no more about it."

"That settles any chance of my getting you into my company," said Winchester. "But I've got one consolation, and that is that no other manager will get you."

"May I ask what your plans are?" asked Mr. Warner. "For the present, I mean. I can guess what they are for the future," with a sly laugh.

"I am going to leave you in charge of my interests here," answered Bob, "and go back to Greenville to see that justice is done to me and to the dead. We will return when the business is settled."

"We," asked Mr. Warner, and Effie smiled.

"Certainly. Jack is going with me. Did you suppose she wasn't?"

"No, indeed; but I thought I'd like to see what she said."

Jack simply smiled and moved closer to Bob.

CHAPTER XXII.

THREE PRECIOUS SCOUNDRELS.

Arthur Warburton did not wait for the first train in the morning in order to leave town.

He went at once to a livery stable and hired a rig to take him to the nearest point on the main line of the railroad.

He feared to stay, knowing that the people were in a bad temper and that the feeling against him might break out in some act of violence at any moment.

He still harbored feelings of revenge against Bob, and determined to do something to hurt the boy, and so be even with him for the humiliation he had suffered.

There was no opportunity to do this in the Gulch, for he did not dare remain, but he determined to find Jerry Blackman, if possible, or some equally bad man, and hire him to do Bob an evil turn.

He did not go very far from the Gulch, therefore, but waited at Mountain Top, hoping that he would find some one there who would help him in his plot against Bob.

He had not been long in the place before he came across the very man he wished most to see.

He knew Jerry, having seen him in the Gulch often, and as soon as he saw him now he went to him and said:

"Hallo, Jerry Blackman, I want to see you."

Now, Jerry had left the Gulch a considerable distance behind him after the failure of the attempt to kidnap Jack, but he had lately found himself as near to the town as he cared to venture.

When young Warburton called him by name, therefore, and expressed a desire to see him, Jerry's first thought was that he was wanted in the Gulch for that last affair.

"Excuse me, pardner," he said, with all the effrontery he could assume on so short a notice, "but you are got a case o' mistaken indentity on yer hands. My name ain't Jerry Blackman, an' it never was, to the best o' my belief."

"Then you never heard of Bob Little and Jack Long and Mr. Wilcox and Lawyer Steele, nor me, either, I suppose?"

Arthur had heard all about Wilcox, and so used the man's name to refresh Jerry's memory, and to prove that he knew him.

"Never heard o' the gents, an' never had the pleasure o' yer company, either. If you are a-tryin' any bunco games on me, young feller, you've come to the wrong place, 'cause I've traveled an' seen better days, an' I'm up ter snuff."

"Oh, I say, Jerry, you needn't shy at me," said Arthur. "I spoke too quickly. 'I'm not after you

on account of that affair in the Gulch. I want you to help me get square on Bob Little. I had to get out of town on his account, and I want to pay him for it. He has lots of friends, and it wouldn't be healthy for me to stay there and try and work the game, but you can help me."

"Allowin' that I are Jerry Blackman, how kin I do it, seein' that, as you say, this here Bob Little are got as much agin me as he has agin you? Wouldn't it be just as unhealthy fur me as fur you?"

"No, for they've forgotten about your trying to run off with Jack. Say, Jack's a girl, did you know that? What I want you to do is to get a gang and jump Bob's mine or go in and clean out the town, or clean him out, anyhow. Can't you do it? Come and have a drink, anyhow."

Jerry consented to this last proposition, but when he had taken his drink, said:

"That's a big order, pard. It ain't safe fur me to go to the Gulch; it ain't really safe for me to be here. As fur gettin' a gang ter clean out the town, you'd need an army. The on'y way ter do would be to get a feller what Bob don't know an' get him to do the business fur Bob some night an' then get out afore mornin'. I can't do it, though I'd like ter, all right."

"Get him, then set him to work. Do you know any one in this place?"

"Yes, but they don't know I'm Jerry Blackman. They's information out agin Jerry in this town on account of a robbery about a month ago, an' I ain't answerin' to thet name, so be keerful how yer call me by it. I'm Billy Doolittle or any old thing but Jerry Blackman in this town."

"All right, but you'll get the man to do the job?"

"Sartin I will. Jumpin' catamounts, there he is now! Remember, I ain't Jerry Blackman."

A rough looking man had entered the place and now, seeing Jerry sitting at a table with a stranger, he came up and said:

"Hello, Jimmy Coldwater, how is everything? Interdooce yer friend. What'll yer have?" I struck it rich last night and I'm flush. Give it a name an' I'll order it."

"Ever been down to the Gulch, Arizony? Know a feller there by the name o' Bob Little? Been strikin' it fine, I hear."

"No, I dunno as I have, but I know the Gulch, all right. She's been boomin' way up lately; grewed from nothin' to a likely-sized town, all in a month."

"Waal, thet there Bob's done this here friend o' mine a dirty shake, an' he wants ter get square. I dassen't go there, 'count of a little job I done, but ef you wanter fix it, there's money into it fur yer. Some resk, o' course, but they's money into it."

"Have a drink, Arizony?" asked Warburton. "Jimmy is an old friend of mine, and he can tell you that when I say a thing I mean it. I want a trusty man to do this job, and I'll pay well for it."

"Killin' job, is it, or on'y just doin' him up, puttin' him ter bed fur a week or so or somethin' like that?"

Arthur Warburton shuddered, but then said desperately:

"Get his money away from him, steal his girl, get him fired out of town, I don't care what."

"We'll tell yer what sort he is," put in Jerry, "so's yer'll know him. Yer don't have ter kill him. It'd make too much noise, but yer kin spoil his good looks or something like thet, or burn his house down."

"That's it," said Warburton, greatly relieved. "Killing him is a shade too much, and besides, it makes too much of a stir even out here."

The trio of scoundrels talked matters over till they reached a conclusion which was to their entire satisfaction, and Arizony made his arrangements to go to Guzzler's Gulch the next morning and look over the ground before acting.

The three were at the station late that afternoon when a train came in from the Gulch, expecting to make connections with a train going east on the main line in about half an hour.

As the three were standing together after the train had been in about five minutes a young fellow, accompanied by two armed men, suddenly stepped up and exclaimed:

"This man is Jerry Blackman, the outlaw, who robbed this section about a month ago. This other is Arthur Warburton, concerned in the robbery of a bank back East. This other fellow I don't know, but he is in very bad company; arrest the lot of them!"

Bob was taking chances, but much was to come of it.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WARBURTON TELLS THE TRUTH AT LAST.

The case against Jerry Blackman was disposed of without difficulty.

Bob had several charges to make against him, but that of robbing the station was the one which had most weight.

He described the occasion minutely and swore positively to Jerry's identity, being backed up by Jack in every particular.

In the interval succeeding the robbery at the station Jerry's record had been hunted up, and it was anything but a good one.

Besides having robbed the boys, there were other charges against him, and he had been proved to be a member of a desperate gang that made the cave at the Gulch its headquarters.

With so many charges against him there was no difficulty in sending Jerry to jail to await trial, and he was subsequently sent to prison for a long term.

There was no especial charge against Arizony, as Bob knew nothing of the conspiracy against him, and the man was let off with a warning and told to keep better company if he wanted to keep out of jail.

With young Warburton the case was different.

(To be continued)

TIMELY TOPICS

In Sumatra the wind decides the length of time a widow should remain single. Just after her husband's death she plants a flagstaff at her door, upon which a flag is raised. While the flag remains un-
torn by the wind, the etiquette of Sumatra forbids her to marry; but at the first rent, however tiny, she can lay aside her weeds, assume her most bewitching smile, and accept the first man who presents himself.

In Switzerland if a child does not attend school on a particular day the parent gets notice from the public authority that he is fined so many francs; the second day the fine is increased, and by the third day the amount becomes a serious one. In case of sickness the pupil is excused, but if there be any suspicion of shamming a doctor is sent. If the suspicion is discovered to be well founded the parent is required to pay the cost of the doctor's visit.

According to the Cumberland (Md.) Daily News: Licensed saloons have again opened in this city after five years of no-license conditions. Both retail and wholesale dealers did an extensive business all day. Special coaches had to be added to the Pennsylvania train running from Mercer, Leesburg and other points in Mercer County, which is now dry. Standing room was at a premium in the train and it is rumored that additional train service will be arranged to take care of the increased traffic originating in Mercer County.

William Lemp, Jr., fifteen-year-old son of the millionaire St. Louis brewer was recently severely paddled by fellow students at the Newman School for Boys, Hackensack, N. J. As a result of the paddling, the boy has been withdrawn from the school. Several days ago, it seems, William was asked by Lannin Benoist, a first class man, to perform some duty on the campus. Young Lemp refused and "talked back." He was stretched across a chair. Nineteen boys are said to have joined in the paddling operation that followed.

A pet pony ridden by Aubry Craft, son of Albert Craft, living north of Fairfield, Neb., is believed to have saved the boy's life while he lay unconscious, after an attack by a vicious bull. When the boy failed to return after having gone for the cattle, a search was started. He was found lying in the pasture, his face badly torn. He was unconscious. Near by was his pony. The tracks in the dirt showed the animal had raced around and around the unconscious boy, keeping away the bull that had attacked him. Later, when driven near the bull, the pony attempted to attack the animal.

His clothing becoming entangled in machinery at the plant of the Tindal-Morris Company, of Eddystone, Pa., J. T. Hargoot, of Philadelphia, was whirled around a shaft and would have been killed had not the buttons on his overalls ripped off, allowing him to drop to the floor. Hargoot, who had been working at the plant less than an hour when the accident happened, is in the Chester Hospital with a fractured skull, a broken right arm and numerous other injuries. Physicians expect him to recover, however. Hargoot had purchased a new pair of overalls; but did not put them on when he went to work. He is satisfied had he worn them instead of using an old worn pair he would have been whirled to his death.

In British waters there now floats a certain ship which embodies many novel features of extreme importance, says the New York Times. So carefully were these secrets guarded while she was being built that the vessel, while on the stocks and during the period of her equipment, was known by all working upon her as H.M.S. Hush. Then came her launching, when she was christened H.M.S. Rampageous. (This, by the way, is not her real name in the navy list—the censor might object to the publication of her real name.) Now, after she has been the cynosure of all British naval eyes for some time, her novel characteristics are found so startling that she is commonly referred to by the navy men as H.M.S. Outrageous.

Visions of untold riches have filled the minds of several colored workmen on the farm of Gen. A. R. Benson, near Dover, Del., who already have unearthed what is supposed to be a cache of stolen goods. So far there have been found four watches, two of which are gold; three women's solid gold rings, a solid gold watch fob, gold breastpins, a \$20 gold piece, two \$10 gold pieces, two \$5 gold pieces and one \$2.50 gold piece. All were found around a large stump, which the workmen a few days ago set about to remove. All of the jewelry and money were in a good state of preservation, except one of the watches, a nickel one, in which the works are rusted. The latest find, a \$20 gold piece, has inspired the workmen to greater diligence, and they are seeking more of the treasure, which they believe lies buried deeper than where they already have dug. It is the belief of Gen. Benson and others who have visited the place that the jewelry and gold were stolen and buried several years ago, when that part of the farm was a wilderness, and that the thief or thieves expected to return and claim their loot, but lost trace of the tree.

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Good Current News Articles

George W. Coombs, aged forty-nine, caught nearly 200 pounds of snapping turtles in Tanner's Creek, about eighty miles from Lawrenceburg, Ind. Coombs used a trout-line, and baited the hooks with frogs, fishing nearly all night. He sold part of his catch for 15 cents a pound and butchered the two largest turtles, weighing nearly fifty pounds, to give several friends turtle soup at a smoker.

William Bryer, a farmer, who resides near Greenville, Pa., lost his five senses when he was kicked by a horse. The animal, although not shod, delivered the kick which landed on Bryer's head and face with enough force to leave a clear imprint of the hoof. Immediately after Bryer became blind. In rapid sequence he lost his sense of hearing, smell, taste and feeling. His condition puzzles physicians as no fracture of the skull has been found.

The skeleton of a monster elk is the center of curiosity in a Royal Centre store window, Logansport, Ind. It was found on the farm of Charles Costello, in Boone Township. Costello's plough struck an old rusty chain. As the chain was dug up, it led to an ancient bear trap, in which was found firmly fastened an animal's hoof. The entire skeleton of the elk was unearthed in fairly good condition. Residents of the township estimate that the skeleton is more than 100 years old.

"In spite of the high price of gasoline, it really does not cost us any more per mile to run the average 1916 car than it did the cars of 1905 or 1906," is the statement recently made at a meeting of the Society of Automobile Engineers, and the speaker further said: "The increased efficiency of engines and decreased weight of car have certainly enabled us to go more miles on a gallon of gasoline; in fact, I think almost double what was possible ten years ago, or even five years ago in this country."

When wood is badly dented or scratched it is often a problem to know how to get rid of the marks. This is quite easy if the following plan is adopted. First of all fold a piece of blotting-paper at least four times; then saturate with water, finally allowing the superfluous moisture to drip away. Now heat a flat-iron until it is about the warmth required for laundry work. Place the damp blotting paper over the dent and press firmly with the iron. As soon as the paper dries examine the mark. It will then be found that the cavity has filled up to a surprising extent. Where the dent is very deep a second, or even a third, application on the lines indicated might be tried. Sooner or later even serious depressions can be drawn up, and most people who have not tried this plan will be surprised at the result of the treatment. Repolishing will clear away even the slight marks that might finally remain.

Grins and Chuckles

"I've not seen old Mrs. Wiggins lately. How is she?" "Dead, sir." "What, joined the great majority?" Oh, no, sir. She was a good enough woman as far as I know."

"I'd rather have a nutmeg than fame," said the idiot. "Why?" said the wise man. "Because," replied the idiot, "fame is for the great, but the nutmeg is for the grater."

"Jinks claims to be able to speak seven different languages." "Yes, and if you'll notice, he has picked out only the languages that no one in this part of the world pretends to know anything about."

Aged Groom—I have a confession to make. Young Bride—Goodness! What? Aged Groom—I wear false teeth. Young Bride—Oh, well, never mind. If they are on a gold plate, they will probably be worth something.

Alfred, aged five, had intently watched his mother place a coin in a telephone box and speak to his father. When the latter returned home in the evening, Alfred eagerly inquired: "Did you catch the nickel mamma put in the little black box, papa?"

The judge did not seem to appreciate the remarks of the lawyer for the defense. (Several years before they had had a fight over the question of religion.) At last the judge interrupted the lawyer and said: "Do you know that everything you are saying is going in one ear and out the other?" The lawyer turned to him and replied: "Your Honor, what is to prevent it?"

Sunday School Teacher—I told you last Sunday that I wished each of you would try to make at least one person happy during the week. Did you? Boy—Yes, miss; I made grandma happy. "That's noble. How did you do it?" "I went to visit her, and she's always happy when she sees I've got a good appetite."

THE LITTLE ORDERLY.

By Kit Clyde.

Several years ago a Mr. James O. Taylor was appointed one of the sub-Indian agents in Arizona. The agency of which Mr. Taylor had charge lay on the extreme frontier, and at times was hardly regarded safe.

He was located at a fort where a small trading post had suddenly sprung up, and a company of soldiers was thought sufficient to guard the agency. These were under the command of Lieut. Charles R. Pierson, a brave but careless officer of the U. S. A.

For the last few months after his arrival at the agency everything had been so quiet that Mr. Taylor brought out his family, consisting of two lovely little girls of fourteen and eleven years of age.

The girls found it very lonesome at the old fort, and soon began to pine for their associates at home.

The only person near their own age was a boyish-looking sergeant named Rush. Johnny Rush was only eighteen years of age and had been but a few months in the army, yet for his sterling worth and intelligence had been promoted to orderly in his company.

The captain and second lieutenant were away, one at an eastern watering-place, and the other home; so the entire command fell on Lieutenant Pierson. He being too indolent to attend to the business, the principal part was thrown on Johnny Rush, the little orderly, as he was called.

Johnny bore this double duty with perfect good nature, never murmuring. He soon became a great favorite with the children of Mr. Taylor. When not required to be on duty he devoted a portion of his time to their amusement.

They frequently took rides upon the plain on spirited but docile little Indian ponies. Both the girls were excellent riders, and Johnny was a gallant escort.

One morning Lieutenant Pierson informed the little orderly that he was going to take a squad of men and set out for Prescott.

"Why, lieutenant," he said, in astonishment, "is it not a little rash to start there now? It is fully seventy-five miles away, and we have not had any very pleasant news lately."

"Oh, bosh!" replied the negligent lieutenant, who, when his mind was made up, changed for nothing. "If one gets scared at every whisper the wind sends over the prairie he will be eternally scared."

"But, lieutenant, when our scout came in last he reported the Apaches in large force not far away," persisted the little orderly.

"What do I care for that? I shall only take twenty men with me, and I'll risk it with them. That will leave forty-two here with you in the fort. You can surely defend it against all the Apaches in the territory with that many men."

"I shall do my duty," answered the young soldier, with a sigh.

The lieutenant then detailed a duty sergeant and nineteen men to accompany him. They saddled their horses and galloped away over the plain.

Mr. Taylor looked uneasy after the retiring cavalcade and wished from his heart they had not gone.

The little orderly felt that a great responsibility rested on him, and he took every precaution to make the fort safe. It had been erected three or four years before, and consisted of three blockhouses in a triangular shape, with slight earthworks and palisades, making the triangle complete.

Upon a careful inspection he found many of the palisades so rotten that they could almost be pushed down, and the fortification was very weak in three or four places.

He set men to work making the repairs that had been needed so long.

"Can we not go riding on the plains, papa?" said Lillie to her father, as they walked about watching the men at work.

"You must not go to-day, my darling," said the father, gazing anxiously over the plain. "I have heard that there are Indians not far away."

Lillie sighed, and seeking her sister Hannah, told her they could not go. Then they both sighed and said what a lovely afternoon it was, and wished papa was not so scarey.

The gates of the fort were open, and the soldiers not engaged on the works were strolling back and forth. The guard walked lazily along his beat, and wished he was off duty that he might go to sleep.

The fort was on the head waters of a small stream, which was fringed with a fine growth of forest trees. The grove came to within a few hundred yards of the fort. A guard of two men had been placed there, who were passing away the time with a greasy deck of cards.

The little orderly was still urging on his men in the work of repairing. It was the middle of the afternoon and the soldiers were lazily digging and pecking away.

The crack of a rifle down in the direction of the picket post startled all.

"To arms, fall in!" cried the little orderly.

In an instant the long roll sounded, making the earth tremble with the roar, and the men sprang to their muskets, buckling on their belts and accoutrements.

"What does it mean, father, why does that awful drum beat so fearfully?" asked the frightened Hannah.

"That is summoning the men to death," answered Mr. Taylor, as with pale, almost bloodless lips, he stood at the door of the blockhouse.

A volley of gun shots and a chorus of yells came from the woods. They saw one of the sentries flying toward the fort, with fully three hundred painted Indians after him.

Shot after shot was fired at the poor fellow as he ran for life. He dropped his gun and ran on. A ball knocked his hat off, and he ran the faster. Now he limps. His arm is shattered, and he is failing.

but continues to run, his comrades in the fort cheering him on. He is struck in the shoulder, almost falls, but continues to limp feebly forward. At last, when almost safe within the walls of the fort, he sinks and dies from a shot through the body.

The soldiers fully appreciated the deadly foe with whom they had to contend. The prairie was covered with the red demons speeding forward like the wind, or foot and horseback.

The well-disciplined troops began a steady and effective fire, as soon as they were in range, which they returned from three hundred rifles.

The battle raged; the rattle of firearms and roaring shouts of many voices drowned the feeble groans of the dying. The smoke covered the plain and rolled over the fort.

The little orderly was everywhere, encouraging his men to their utmost in coolness and precision of aim.

This had been only a sub-outpost, and a strong guard had never been deemed necessary for it, consequently was but illy prepared for the attack.

The frightened children, whose ears were unaccustomed to the flash of guns and shouts of combatants, clung frantically to their father.

Some places in the palisades were so weak that the sergeant had constant fears of a breach being made. He kept a strong force at the weak places, and the men, being good marksmen, kept the enemy away.

During a lull in the attack Mr. Taylor approached the young sergeant and asked what their chances were for beating the enemy off.

"I can't say," said Johnny, shaking his head. "They outnumber us five to one, and may have reinforcements coming. We will die like men, Mr. Taylor. If we cannot save your family, we can die trying."

"Noble fellow, gallant soldier," said Mr. Taylor, his eyes growing moist. "I will not permit you to do all the fighting. I see yonder a poor soldier lying on the ground, who has fought his last battle. His gun is at his side. I shall take it and become a common soldier in your ranks and help in our mutual defense."

The remainder of the day was spent in constant fighting, sometimes in repelling a charge on one side, then on another. Then came intervals in which only an occasional dropping shot could be heard. The soldiers had fought well, and the plain was strewn with dead and dying savages.

Mr. Taylor shared the common danger and fatigue with them, and they lifted their caps in silent admiration of his coolness and bravery as the enemy retired out of gun range, to form another plan of attack.

"Mr. Taylor," said the little orderly, with a look of intense anxiety on his face, "I feel it my duty to make a startling discovery to you."

"What is it?" said the man, calmly.

"We are almost out of ammunition, and cannot possibly hold out until morning. Even if we were

well supplied, the works are too weak to withstand the cunning and desperation of our enemies during the night. As soon as it is dark enough to cover their approach, they will advance in a body on us. They will not be seen, perhaps, until within the walls of the fort. There will be a few moments' maddening, desperate fighting, and then all will be over. Some may escape in the general confusion, but it will be few."

"I feel in my heart every word you utter to be the truth," replied Mr. Taylor, "and I am strongly impressed that I shall be among those who fall. I have a request to make of you—that is, that you will rescue my little girls, if possible. In the general melee you may find an opportunity to escape with them. Will you do so?"

"I shall, or die!" and then the Indian agent wrung the hand of the young soldier in silence.

Darkness gathered about the plain.

It seemed as if the furies of a volcano had burst upon the fort. The earth shook with yells, the heavens were red with blazing guns, the enemy poured through, under and over the palisades, and joined in hand-to-hand combat with the soldiers.

Johnny Rush remained to give a last command—to know that all was over—to see Mr. Taylor fall dead at his feet—and hastened away in the darkness to where Hannah and Lillie stood behind a blockhouse, trembling with terror.

"Come!" he whispered to them, "all is lost, and we must escape if we can."

He led them through the back way, and out on the plain. They ran for some distance and then paused on the dark, broad prairie to gaze back on the scene.

The Indians were still shooting and stabbing the soldiers, some of whom were fighting stubbornly. The blockhouses were on fire, and they made haste to get out of the circle of the light.

Some of the survivors of the general massacre had escaped, and were running over the plain as fast as they could; some pursued and many killed by the relentless red foe.

The young orderly hurried his little companions on as fast as possible, encouraging them by kind words, and even carrying them by turns in his arms. Thus a long, weary night passed, and by morning they were far away from the late scene of carnage. They concealed themselves in a thick chaparral during the sultry day that followed. Another weary night's travel without food, and at dawn the next day they were picked up by a body of soldiers sent out expressly to find survivors of the massacre. They were taken, worn out and half starved, to a military post.

This event happened many years ago, and as the young reader is always anxious to learn the final disposition of a character, we will add that Johnny Rush, the little orderly, is now post captain on the frontier, and Hannah Taylor, now Mrs. Rush, his wife, is one of the most beautiful women in the Far West.

FROM ALL POINTS

A former Union soldier, who was paid \$50 too much when discharged at the close of the civil war, returned the money to the treasury, with \$100 interest. The contribution went into the Conscience Fund.

Thomas Dunbar, of Seattle, attributes to a silver dollar the saving of his life when Conrad Leo fired point-blank at his breast. Dunbar was stunned by the blow of the bullet striking the silver in a vest pocket. Apparently under the impression that Dunbar at least had been wounded, Leo shot himself and died soon afterward. The two had quarreled over a rooming house transaction.

"I will be up Saturday." This message, written on an egg in a crate of eight dozen, cost a merchant of Wheeling, W. V., \$5.78 in postage. The eggs were sent by a Sardis, Ohio, huckster by parcel post and when the package was opened at the Wheeling postoffice for inspection the message was weighed and charged for at first-class postage rates.

Mrs. William H. Wholf, of York, Pa., whose husband was killed several weeks ago by a train, found \$14,000 in notes and bank certificates of deposit hidden in the cellar of her home. The money was in a paint bucket and Mrs. Wholf found it by carrying out the instructions of her husband. He had told her to dig in a certain corner of the cellar in event of sudden death. The Wolfes were in moderate circumstances.

One of the biggest catches of bullfrogs ever made at Columbus, Ind., is reported by Carmel Carmichael, a fish dealer. Some one told him of a place where there were many frogs, and he went after them at night. By "shining their eyes" with a strong light he managed to catch 200 with his hands. Some of them weighed a pound. Frog "ham" are worth about \$3 a dozen, and he expects to get nearly \$50 for his night's work.

The volcano of Mauna Loa is erupting with increased activity, according to reports received at Honolulu. A new flow of lava started, and at last reports was moving at the rate of two miles a day. The lava was passing through a heavy forest of mahogany trees, burning the stumps and carrying the trunks on the top of the molten metal.

The Kahuku water system was believed to be in danger from the lava stream, which was reported as being about a quarter of a mile wide.

The port of New York is now the greatest in the world, leading all others in commerce, according to the data of the United States statistical abstract

made public May 24, 1916. Figures compiled by the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce credit New York with an aggregate foreign trade of \$2,125,000,000, which exceeds by \$200,000,000 the commerce of London, now second in rank. In the matter of exports the pre-eminence of New York over London is even greater, export clearances from the American metropolis aggregating \$1,194,000,000 in the fiscal year 1915, against \$696,000,000 from London, a difference of more than 70 per cent.

The flint pebble industry gives occupation to many women and children along the French coast lying between Havre and Dieppe. The pebbles collected in and near Havre are selected for their spherical shape, and are used exclusively for pulverizing in certain industries, particularly in the manufacture of cement, and in copper mines, being employed in the interior of large cylinders. In the cement industry the slow turning of the pebbles produces a powder which becomes an ingredient of the cement, while in the copper industry the metal is freed of all impurities by the grinding operation. The same kind of pebbles is used for crushing purposes in the manufacture of paint. Another important use of flint pebbles is in the manufacture of porcelain, the pebbles for this purpose being found between Fecamp and Calais. In the latter case the pebbles are pulverized before using.

Disinherited by his mother on account of his participation in the European war as a surgeon in the German army, Dr. Guido Hinkel of Freiberg, Germany, instituted proceedings in the Lebanon County, Pa., courts to break the will of his mother, the late Rosalie Parant Coleman of Paris, France. Following the death of Mrs. Coleman at Paris on April 8, 1915, it was found that while originally she had named her son as the principal beneficiary under the will, she had by a codicil on February 23, 1915, disinherited him in the following terse language: "On account of the war I disinherit my son, Guido Hinkel." The estate left by the late Mrs. Coleman is estimated at \$1,000,000, consisting chiefly of holdings in the Cornwall iron ore banks at Cornwall, in this county, which she leaves to her nephew, J. Coleman Drayton; her second cousin, Ronald George De Reuter, and her friend, Camille Besson, all American citizens. The proceedings instituted are in the form of an appeal from the judgment of the local Register's Court in granting last February letters of administration to the Pennsylvania Company for Insurance on Lives and Granting Annuities of Philadelphia, and is to be followed by a petition for the transfer of the proceedings to the local Orphans' Court for trial.

ARTICLES OF ALL KINDS

CAT NURSES FOXES.

Daniel Wiggins, who lives near Granger, N. S., felled a tree on his place recently and discovered that a mother fox and family had been deprived of their home in the midst of the roots. The old fox was killed; Wiggins carried the infants to his home and delivered them to a cat who had just lost her little ones—by drowning. The cat accepted the substitute babies with satisfaction.

PRICE OF SLAP \$2,500.

A "moderate" slap is worth \$2,500. Such was the decision the other day in the case of Francis Seiberling, an Akron attorney, who sued Henry W. Corning, president of the Standard Sewing Machine Company, for \$25,000 for a slap alleged to have been given him last November while the two were arguing over the right to occupy a Pullman drawing room for which both held tickets. The case, which lasted four days, was tried before Judge Frank B. Gott, of Common Pleas Court, Cleveland, Ohio. The jury deliberated three hours.

USED HOT POKER.

Miss Mountain, of Uniontown, Pa., weighing 115 pounds, must pay a fine imposed on her by a Smithfield Township justice because she threatened to use a red-hot poker on J. W. Barger, age sixteen, and weighing 150 pounds, after he had threatened to duck her in a watering-trough.

Miss Mountain ordered Barger to write a composition. The pupil refused, and threatened to carry Miss Mountain outside the school and drop her in the watering-trough. The little school mistress locked the doors, pushed a poker into the coals and heated it red-hot.

"Now will you write that composition or take a beating with this poker?" she asked.

Barger wrote the composition. His parents had the girl arrested.

SOME BIG BLUFFS.

The secret evacuation of Suvla and Anzac by the English army of occupation under the very noses of the Turks—"the biggest bluff in war's history," as it has not inaptly been termed—bears a close resemblance to the similar abandonment of the Redan by the Russians during the Crimean War.

For months the heavy guns of the French and British had been pounding unavailingly at this exceedingly strong fortress. Twice they had tried to storm it, only to be repulsed with great slaughter. A third attack had been ordered to take place on September 18, but on the early morning of that date, before daybreak, Corporal Ross of the Royal

British Engineers, who was in charge of one of the advanced saps, noticing that the place was strangely still, crept forward to investigate.

He found the works untenanted, save by dead men and a few badly wounded, and hastened back to report to the British commander, who at first refused to believe him. But investigation soon proved the truth of the plucky corporal's statements. The entire garrison had been quietly withdrawn under cover of darkness to the north forts, leaving the road to Sebastopol open, the Philadelphia Ledger tells us.

Ross was awarded the Victoria Cross and was known thenceforward throughout the British army as "Redan Ross."

When the armies of Napoleon were overrunning Europe, General Massena, with 18,000 men, appeared suddenly before the Austrian town of Feldkirch and demanded its surrender. Instead of complying, the burgomaster issued orders that the church bells were to be set ringing and that the burghers, their wives and daughters, clad in holiday attire, were to assemble in the market square and there make merry.

The result was exactly what he had hoped for. Massena heard the sounds of rejoicing, watched from the heights overlooking the town the gathering of throngs in the streets and came to the conclusion that the townsfolk must have received intelligence that the Austrian army, which was believed to be somewhere in the vicinity, was advancing to their relief.

As to give battle there and then formed no part of Napoleon's general plan of action, Massena ordered a retreat. Feldkirch was saved, and by a bluff, for as a matter of fact no relieving force was anywhere near at the time.

A bluff that was eminently successful resulted in the Earl of Peterborough securing possession of Barcelona in the early part of the eighteenth century.

The defenses of the city at that time were extremely strong. Peterborough had with him barely 3,000 indifferently armed troops and two small cannon. Halting his force some miles away in the hills, he rode forward, attended only by a small escort bearing a flag of truce, and demanded an audience with the Governor.

To him the earl explained that he had been ordered to take the city by assault, but being wishful to avoid useless bloodshed he preferred to allow him to surrender it of his own free will.

Incredible though it may seem, this most colossal of bluffs "came off." The Governor, after some parleying, agreed to accept the British's general alternative.

THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES

BIG POPLAR TREE.

Perhaps one of the largest poplar trees ever marketed in Kentucky has just been cut, manufactured and loaded at Kona Station for shipment to Cincinnati dealers. The tree was ten feet in diameter at the butt and was over 300 feet to the first limb. When sawed it cut out 12,700 feet of first-class lumber, 6,000 feet of other grades—in all nearly 19,000 feet. It was cut in the Cumberland Mountains not far from the Virginia border line.

HEIR TO \$10,000 KEEPS WORKING.

Milton Hapner, aged sixty, employed in a livery stable in Fort Wayne, Ind., has received \$10,000 from the estate of a relative who lived in the East, but neither will quit his livery stable job nor invest his money in any way. To all advice as to how to become a millionaire Mr. Hapner turns a deaf ear. "I have worked hard all my life, and I expect to keep on working," Mr. Hapner said. This money came to me unexpectedly, and I'm going to hold on to it."

MOVING STONES.

There is a curiosity in Long Pond, Cumberland County, Maine. On the easterly side of the pond is a cove which extends about 100 rods farther east than the general course of the shore. The bottom is clay, and so shoal that a man may wade 50 rods into the pond. At the bottom of this cove are stones of various sizes, which have an annual motion toward the shore. The proof of this is the mark or track left behind them, and the bodies of clay driven up before them.

Some of these stones are two or three tons weight, and have left a track of several rods behind them, having at least a common cartload of clay before them. The shore of the cove is lined with these stones, which, it would seem, have crawled out of the water.

THE WOOD PULP PRODUCT.

The forests of the United States are contributing over 2,891,000 tons of wood pulp a year to the paper industry. The paper thus produced in 1914 was valued at more than \$294,000,000, according to the Census Bureau. The total value of all the wood pulp products exceeded \$332,000,000, as against more than \$267,000,000 in 1909.

Of the 727 paper mills, 152 were in New York State, 86 in Massachusetts, 59 in Wisconsin, 54 in Pennsylvania, 48 in Ohio, 44 in Connecticut, 39 in Michigan, 38 in Maine, 34 in New Jersey, and the rest scattering. There are six in the South.

The newspapers produced used 1,180,000 tons in 1914, valued at \$17,332,000, and 127,000 tons in

\$ 2 to \$500 EACH paid for hundreds of old Coins. Keep ALL money dated before 1895 and send TEN cents for New Illustrated Coin Value Book, size 4x7. It may mean your Fortune. CLARKE COIN CO., Box 95, Le Roy, N. Y.

GREENBACKS

Pack of \$1,000 Stage Bills, 10c; 3 packs, 25c. Send for a pack and show the boys what a WAD you carry. C. A. NICHOLS, JR., Box 90, Chili, N. Y.

in sheets, valued at \$5,610,000. The book paper amounted to 935,000 tons, valued at \$74,000,000. The fine paper amounted to 248,000 tons, valued at \$34,000,000.

Other materials used in paper making were 371,346 tons of rags, 1,578,000 tons of waste paper, 121,230 tons of rope, jute bagging, threads, etc., and 309,345 tons of straw.

The output of wrapping paper was 881,799 tons; blotting paper, 14,157 tons; tissue paper, 121,598 tons; wall paper, 96,527 tons; building paper, 243,908 tons. The industry grew in value of products 24 per cent. since 1909.

IN SPITE OF STONE WALLS.

Even stone walls cannot keep thieves out of a bank. The directors of the Bank of England were once startled to receive an invitation to meet an unknown man in the strong room of the bank at midnight. "You think you is all safe hand you bank his safe, but I knows better. I bin hinside the bank, the last 2 nite hand you nose nuffin about it. But I am nott a theaf so hif yer will meet mee in the great squar room, with all the moneys, at twelf 2 nite. Ile explain orl to you, let only 2 cum down, and say nuffin to nobody." The strong room was guarded the next night, in spite of a disposition to regard the letter as a hoax, by police, and—nothing occurred. The next phase of the mystery was more astonishing than ever. A heavy chest of papers and securities taken from the strong room arrived at the bank, with a letter complaining that the directors had set the police upon the writer, and that he had therefore not appeared as he promised; but to prove that he was neither a thief nor a fool he sent a chest of papers he had taken from the bank. Let a few gentlemen be alone in the room, and he would join them at midnight, said the writer, and to cut short a long and strange chapter of bank history, a man with a dark lantern burst into the strong room of the bank at midnight after calling from behind the stone walls for the directors to put out the lights. He was one of a strange class of men who gained a living by searching the sewers at night, and through an opening from a sewer he had found his way into the richest room in the world.

No. 564

JULY 21, 1916

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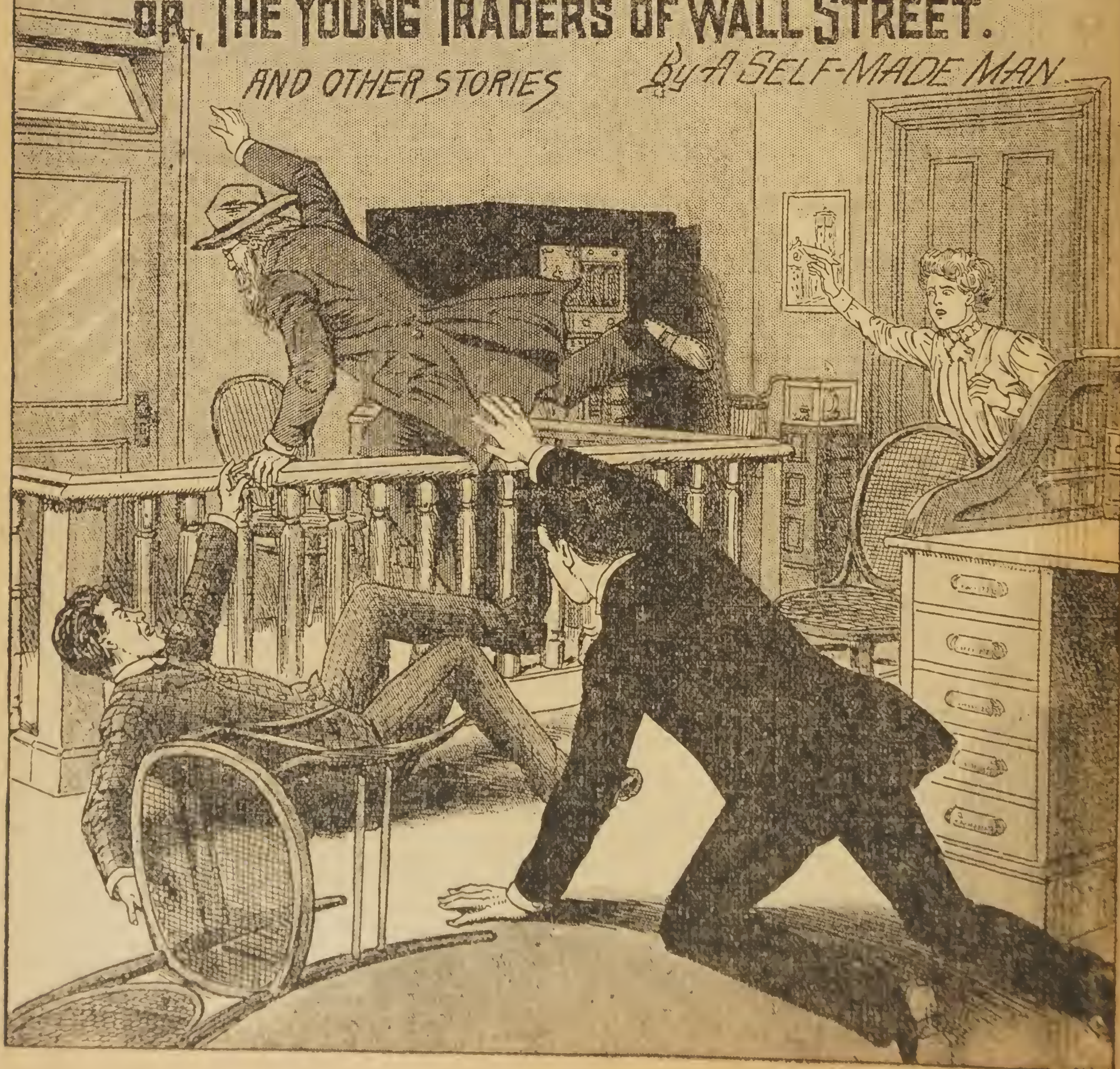
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